The Communists in France—RAOUL DAMIENS

new Masses

JUNE 16, 1936

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Henry Ford's Duke of Michigan

SECOND ARTICLE IN A SERIES

Who Backs the Black Legion?

By JOHN L. SPIVAK

Spain's Collective Farms

ILYA EHRENBOURG

This Land of Ours—ROBERT FORSYTHE

ife Has Become More Joyous"—JOSHUA KUNITZ

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Political Prisoners

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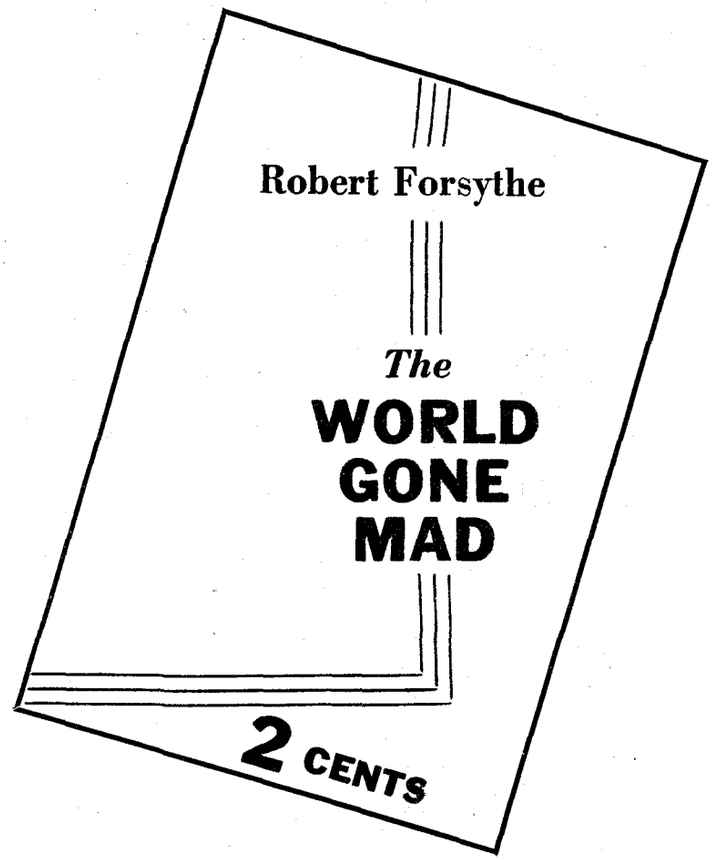

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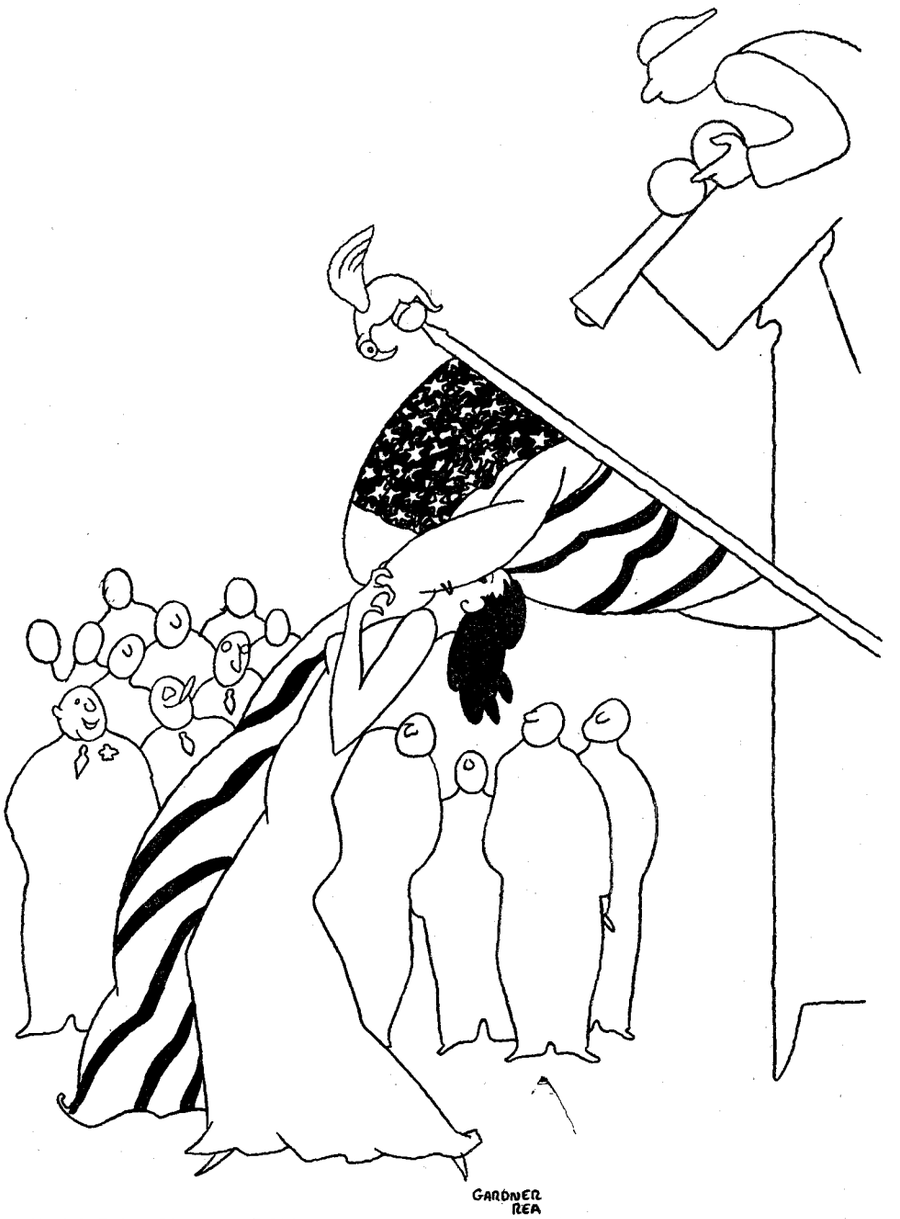
New Masses

JUNE 16, 1936

A Novelist's "Crime"

THE organized terror against the striking cotton choppers in Arkansas is attracting nationwide attention. THE NEW MASSES' special correspondents, Josephine Johnson, Pulitzer Prize novelist, and Joe Jones, painter, went on June 6 to Forrest City, Arkansas, with Caroline Drew, labor organizer. There, they attended the trial of Dave Benson, organizer of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union. In the crowded courtroom, the novelist, painter and labor organizer talked with a Negro striker—and were promptly arrested. Sheriff J. M. Campbell explained that they were permitted to speak to anyone they liked—provided they spoke only to court officials or to him. And when the three displayed their press cards from the East St. Louis Journal and THE NEW MASSES, the sheriff said: "We's seen those before; they don't mean nothin' to us."

The visitors were released after a brief session in jail, during which time they were searched, their baggage rifled, their private letters opened and read by the local police officers. We expect to publish Josephine Johnson's article with Joe Jones' illustrations in an early issue.



FLAG DAY ON THE LOT

Gardner Rea

The Way Out

THE Supreme Court's ruling on New York's minimum-wage law, and President Roosevelt's failure to challenge the Court's usurpation of power, compels those who have held back from active support for a national Farmer-Labor Party seriously to reconsider their stand. The President's readiness to yield before advancing reaction can be traced in no small measure to the gratuitous endorsement he has received from influential trade-union leaders. In the absence of that independent pressure which the labor movement is capable of exercising in its own interests, the President has been left free to retreat at a speed determined only by his anxiety to placate finance capital. The dire consequences in store for labor if the present trend is permitted to continue, become increasingly evident. The Liberty League forces behind the destruction of minimum-wage legislation are bent on crushing the trade-union movement itself. The Black Legion revelations prove the gravity of the fascist danger.

Efforts of progressive unionism to organize the basic industries can be nullified if this legal and extra-legal assault of Big Business is not halted immediately. Spokesmen for Labor's Non-Partisan League and for the Committee for Industrial Organization have in recent declarations shown themselves to be favorably disposed toward the idea of independent political action. Further delay in making these sympathies effective may prove very costly. Already the groundwork for a national Farmer-Labor Party in 1936 has been prepared.

At the conference held in Chicago last week the proper organizational channels were established for its creation. The Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party, aided by a national advisory council, is throwing its full weight behind the movement. Roosevelt's labor supporters may enter into the movement without compromising their pledges of support to the President, ill-advised as these pledges may be. A national Farmer-Labor Party in 1936, counting on the support of the mainstream of the labor movement, could return a bloc of victorious Congressional candidates who would really fight reaction. It would carry into effect the defiance of Supreme Court despotism voiced by the last convention of the American Federation of Labor, by pressing for a constitutional amendment and by taking immediate steps to challenge the right of the Supreme Court to throw out legislation duly enacted by Congress.

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Let Them Choose!

WE have been going over some old letters from Arthur and Elise Ewert, and have marveled again at the nobility of spirit of this German couple. One letter from Elise Ewert, written in 1927, discusses Floyd Dell's novels; another urges us to read *The Counterfeiters,* "a wonderful novel with a new style"; a third advises us to put more of the passion of the social struggle into the pages of THE NEW MASSES. Arthur was at that time warning the German workers against Hitler: Elise was calling their attention to the autobiography of Mother Jones.

For many months the Ewerts have been tortured in the prisons of the Vargas dictatorship in Brazil. Now Vargas has ordered them deported to Germany. This may add two more lives to the toll already taken by the dictator, whose ferocity in persecuting liberals knows no limits. Victor Barron, young American, has been killed by the Vargas police; Luis Carlos Prestes, idol of the Brazilian people, languishes in jail with 17,000 other progressive men and women, many of them intellectuals. The most recent victims of the Vargas tyranny is Rodolfo Ghioldi, secretary of the Argentine Communist Party and recognized as Latin America's leading Marxist. Ghioldi, visiting Rio de Janeiro, has "mysteriously" disappeared while in police custody.

Arthur and Elise Ewert are scheduled for deportation to Nazi Germany to face the concentration camp, perhaps death. Last week, New York workers and intellectuals demonstrated before the Brazilian consulate and similar protests are being held elsewhere to free Luis Carlos Prestes, Rodolfo Ghioldi and to allow Arthur and Elise Ewert's deportation to *a country of their own choice.*

"Anti-Hearst Day"

WITH the organization by the American League Against War and Fascism of a Citizens' Committee Against Hearst, the fight against America's union-busting-Red-baiting-war-mongering fascist makes a sturdy advance. Over a hundred trade unions and numerous church, liberal and peace groups are supporting the Committee's announced plans for making July 4 "Anti-Hearst Day." Senator Schwellenbach will deliver a radio speech analyzing the dangers of the Hearst press. Millions of people at the beaches for the holiday will be presented with leaflets, pamphlets, speakers and even fireworks denouncing Hearst and urging all anti-fascists, liberals, trade-unionists and everyone opposed to war to boycott Hearst's newspapers and magazines. Other communities inflicted with Hearst publications can support the New York Committee by organizing similar activities for Independence Day.

Robinson's Rage

THE struggle for higher salaries, promotions and improved tenure conditions in New York's municipal colleges has reached an acute stage. Prior to the charge by the City College Alumni Committee that President Frederick B. Robinson is to be whitewashed in the investigation of his fitness for office, Dr. Robinson managed to persuade Tammany-appointed heads of Brooklyn and Hunter colleges to agree with his proposal that the by-laws governing tenure of office be amended. The suggested changes exclude legal protection for a significant number of the staff in all three municipal colleges and the majority of the City College staff. Moreover, allowable grounds for dismissal that will hang over those lucky enough to survive the "purge" threatened for next year, practically destroy tenure as an actuality. Disloyalty to the college, or *any other cause which makes a teacher unfit* will be sufficient reason for dismissal.

These developments certainly justify the opinion of the Teachers Union that the Schappes case has not yet been won. Dr. Robinson has defied City College trustees (who ruled that all teachers on the staff for three years or over could be removed only after a public hearing) by sending a notice of dismissal to Robert J. Rosenthal who has taught chemistry at the college for five years. The only discernible reason for the second dismissal is Rosenthal's eligibility for promotion.

These attacks on the principle of tenure have been carried out under cover of a gag rule passed by a faculty subservient to Robinson. It reads, in part:

> Recommendations for appointments, promotions and cessation of contract are not properly matters for public discussions until decision has been reached by the administrative authorities.

Plainly, Robinson and the reactionary forces behind him feel strong enough to ignore not only liberal opinion but also the expressed wishes of the College trustees. Certainly Robinson counts on the imminent end of the school year to diminish protest against his dictatorial and arbitrary program.

Mid-West Writers Conference

ISOLATION is not the natural condition of the artist. That concept, the product of a society which virtually outlawed all socially-useful activity which could not be exploited for profit, was discredited in the emerging movement for a reconstruction of society. The 1935 Writers Congress in New York which resulted in the League of American Writers, and the American Artists Congress, which constituted itself as a permanent organization, have proved that creative artists are now realistically aware of the social functions of art, and are prepared to assert their participation in the life of society, especially in view of the threatening fascism which would destroy culture.

But America is so large and the urge for unity so intense that national centers in New York cannot fill the need. The Pacific Coast writers are projecting a conference. The Midwest writers are holding their conference this week in Chicago, June 13 and 14. The call has been issued in the name of the following writers: Meridel LeSueur, Jack Conroy, Nelson Algren, H. H. Lewis, Dale Kramer, Jay duVon, William Pillin, J. S. Balch, Richard Wright, Kerker Quinn, Lewis Fall, Clark Mills, Richard Leekley; and a number of organizations.

The conference in Chicago has been called, among other purposes, to end the isolation of Midwest writers who, though they may be neighbors, learn of one another's work through magazines published in eastern centers. It will discuss plans to make this group reach its own geographical audience, to be effective in its own region. It is certain to be one of the most important cultural events of the year.

Steel's Future

PRESIDENT GREEN of the A.F. of L. threatened the Committee for Industrial Organization (C.I.O.) with expulsion. Mike Tighe and Louis Leonard of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers tried to sidetrack the militancy within their own union. The steel corporations warned that they would resist any attempt at organization. Yet progressive

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sentiment among the workers forced the Amalgamated to accept the C.I.O.'s offer of cooperation.

This acceptance now makes possible an aggressive and determined struggle to unionize America's largest basic industry. It adds another bulwark to the C.I.O., which opposes the outworn, reactionary craft-union policy of the executive committee of the A.F. of L.

John L. Lewis, the C.I.O. spokesman, has won the first round. Victory is meaningless unless he immediately undertakes a consistent, unrelenting drive to organize the steel workers. Such a drive will provide leadership and unity to the entire trade-union movement.

And William Green, defeated, must choose between the grandstand gesture of expelling those unions affiliated with the C.I.O. (thus splitting the American labor movement), or of accepting industrial unionism—with the prospect that Lewis will continue to hold the commanding position. So far Green has bluffed, sententiously "warned" Lewis. Splitting the trade unions into opposing craft and industrial blocs would give definite comfort to the employers. The great bulk of the rank-and-file trade unionists desire industrial organization. They alone can force the reactionary leadership to take steps that will build, not destroy, the American labor movement.

Wartime America

SENATOR CLARK, the most aggressive cross-examiner of the Morgan partners during the Nye Committee hearings, has just issued a report on the War Department's industrial mobilization plan. First formulated in 1933, the proposed legislation would place labor under complete employer-government control, would institute a rigid press censorship and "permit establishment of an actual operating dictatorship." Senator Clark warned that the War Department plans to dominate labor "by laws and rules which are in fact, although not in name, orders to industrial and other labor to either work or fight or starve."

This official plan to Hitlerize America should be no surprise to NEW MASSES readers. Early this year, we published a series of articles by Seymour Waldman which pointed out that the United States is perfecting a gigantic military-industrial machine. At least 12,000 key industrialists hold government contracts for mass production of war materials at a moment's notice; the government has already guaranteed war-time profits to Big Business. Manpower will be conscripted into key factories and front lines.

Furthermore, the very people who are creating the enormous military-industrial machine are the ones who attempt to bring a fascist regime in America at the present time, the ones who officer and direct attacks on civil liberties and the trade unions. Preparations for terror at home cannot be separated from preparations for war abroad.

THE NEW MASSES has already called attention to the Tydings-McCormack military disaffection bill and to the Russell-Kramer bill which is designed to smash organized labor. Our campaign against these bills brought in 1,500 protests from our readers in four weeks. THE NEW MASSES also cited the Nye Committee's summary of the War Department plans for conscripting labor. At that time we showed that the War Department's industrial mobilization plans would place workers under a War Labor Administrator who would be "an outstanding industrial leader." And the War Labor Administration would include "no direct representative of organized or unorganized labor."

This industrial mobilization plan is backed by President Roosevelt's War Department. It is part of the same Roosevelt program which has produced the record-breaking one billion dollar war budget which is hailed by Hearst as the New Deal's "main achievement." It is significant that the extreme reaction and the New Deal agree on war plans if on little else.

Senator Nye and the majority of his committee propose to counteract the war danger by nationalizing the munitions industry. Such nationalization would to some extent hamper the activities of the tory munitions racketeers, but it would not restrict their tyranny unless accompanied by provisions for trade-union wages and the right to strike, picket and organize for all workers in the munitions industry. More important still, nationalization cannot by itself prevent war. War springs not from the activities of the munitions makers alone, but from those of the capitalist class as a whole. The fight for peace requires a great people's movement organized in a Farmer-Labor Party, able to combat those ultra-reactionary forces which are pressing for war and the destruction of civil liberties.

Such a movement could effectively compel the Roosevelt administration to abandon its fascist war plans and to clean out the fascist cliques from the War and Navy Departments and the armed forces of the United States.

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The Communists in France

RAOUL DAMIENS

The following exclusive interview with Maurice Thorez, general secretary of the French Communist Party, is the first to appear in any American publication and was cabled by our correspondent.

Spurred by the electoral victory of the People's Front, the French working class struck spontaneously. The movement rapidly grew until over a million workers, emulating the strikers in the metallurgical industries, demanded economic improvement and employer recognition of their organizations. Workers in industry, transport and commerce occupied factories and shops wherever demands were refused. By combining discipline with firm insistence upon their demands, the strikers prevented the reactionaries from provoking a state of chaos which might have endangered the Blum government.

When the People's Front government took office, it immediately vindicated the trust placed in it. The government itself brought pressure upon employers' organizations and ended the strike with general wage increases, recognition of the unions (initiating the "closed-shop era") and the granting of collective bargaining.

As we go to press, white-collar employes, heartened by the victory, follow the lead of workers in industry and strike for their demands. The government, through Léon Blum, has promised to enact within the next few weeks legislation granting the forty-hour week and vacations with pay.—THE EDITORS.

PARIS, June 8.

MAURICE THOREZ—miner, farmhand, bricklayer, ex-political prisoner—is today, despite his youth, the effective and active leader of the Communist Party of France. You will understand his ability to hold this position when you look at this thirty-six-year-old leader, when you talk to him, when you hear him address meetings or receive the press, when you listen to him debate in the Chamber of Deputies or handle truckmen on strike.

He is at home in every society, among ministers, longshoremen, ambassadors, police officials. He has brains and courage, ardor and suppleness, humor and authority. His vast knowledge of politics, economics and history was not gathered at school but laboriously through study and experience. He is the French Communist Party's diplomat, strategist, organizer and beloved upholder of people's rights. Whenever a delicate job arises, Maurice Thorez is delegated to perform it. Look at his round, pugnosed, boyish countenance, his twinkling, merry, brown eyes, his simplicity and vitality and you will guess why this youth, a member of the Party from his 'teens, has skyrocketed in a few years from the Secretaryship of the Pas de Calais section to the head of the French Communists.

You will understand his rise better still if you know his labors and achievements which, since 1934, have been more than almost any other one man's. He is the architect of the united action with the Socialist Party which blocked fascism in the recent electoral victory of the People's Front.

When I saw him at a meeting last week I said, "Comrade Thorez, for months now THE NEW MASSES has asked me to interview you, but you have been so pressed with work that I refused to pursue you."

"You are a good fellow to spare me," he answered.

"But now that there is a bit of a let-up," I said, "will you give me an appointment?"

"With pleasure, Comrade."

He received me on Friday, June 5, in his bare, tiny office at Party headquarters between sessions of the Chamber of Deputies. I asked him about the strikes that are now sweeping France, their origin and significance.

"After five years of depression," he began, "after workers have been underpaid and overworked, after unemployment and misery and the arrogance of the bosses, the victory of the People's Front resulted in the outburst of impatience on the part of the working class. Strikes broke out in the most exploited trades and spread to the unemployed. This mass movement, like the People's Front itself, is spontaneous and just as disciplined. The great initial danger in the strike movement was that it might disrupt the popular unity and cause irritation among small shopkeepers, peasants and consumers with their working-class brothers. As a Communist fruit-grower of Gard wired, 'You won't let my cherries rot in the markets, Comrades?' So we whispered to the food handlers, 'No nonsense with babies' milk, with the housewives' market baskets, with the tradesmen's living, with the farmers' produce.' As *L'Humanité* put it, 'everything is not possible at this time.' The workers understood and kept within the broad limits. With the cities' food assured, public sympathy was bound to remain with the strikers."

"What, Comrade Thorez, is the Communist conception of the People's Front?"

"The People's Front is very dear to the Communist Party. Ever since February 9, 1934, we have labored unceasingly, first, to gain united action with the Socialist Party comrades and next, with the Radical Socialists, thus creating a United Front against the fascist menace. As early as the Nantes Congress of the Radical Socialists in October, 1934, we said that it is not true that there is no immediate alternative except between Doumergue and the setting up of Soviets. There was room at that time for a policy more nearly corresponding to the people's needs. We insisted on a common front of all proletarians at all costs and the reunification of the General Confederation of Labor (trade unions). It was the Communists who proposed the intertwining of the Red and the Tri-colored flags. We wrote the united oath of July 14, 1935. We were not afraid to proclaim that we love our country and therefore would not let the fascist shame sweep over us. This policy did not stem from the Soviet Union; we French Communists assumed full responsibility for it. We naturally rejoiced when Dimitrov at the Eighth Congress of the Communist International upheld us and recommended the French model of the People's Front to other sections everywhere in the world.

"Why did we do this? Because the elections of 1934 showed certain sections of the middle class were being seduced by fascism as they had been before in Germany and Austria. We were ready despite all sacrifices to obviate such a calamity in France."

"Will the People's Front local committee continue in existence?" I wanted to know.

"The Socialists do not agree with us in this policy. They propose to set up merely skeleton political organizations, but the People's Front was never purely a political organization. We asked for, and the people approved, mass units which include not only the voters, but women and youth. The Radical Socialists want no organization at all. Meanwhile, these committees have grown spontaneously in strength and number. The masses are determined to keep alive the organization which saved their liberties. Victory at the polls is only the beginning. A few weeks hence the Paris district will hold its first Congress of People's Front Committees."

"One more question," I said, "and I'll let you alone."

"Thanks," smiled Maurice Thorez, "I will be grateful for that. The Communist deputies are being seated in the Chamber and every man's presence is now necessary."

"How do you like the present government?"

"I will judge by its fruits," he answered. "If it carries out the program of the People's Front steadily and vigorously, if it democratizes the army, the bureaucracy and the judiciary, if it adopts the public-works program and grants amnesty to political prisoners, if it gives farm aid, passes a capital levy and dissolves the fascist leagues, we will like it and give it unstinted, uninterrupted backing."

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Our "House of Lords"

J. L. PETERSON

IN REPORTING on the decision of the United States Supreme Court declaring the New York Minimum Wage Law unconstitutional, the newspapers stated that the decision "shocked" Congressional leaders as well as political leaders generally in Washington and elsewhere. Among the persons thus shocked was Governor Herbert H. Lehman of New York, whose brother, Judge Irving Lehman of the New York State Court of Appeals, wrote the dissenting opinion on behalf of the minority, when that law was declared unconstitutional a few months ago by the State Court of Appeals in a four-to-three decision.

There was good reason why the intelligent upholders of the present system should be shocked. This decision makes one thing clear beyond the shadow of doubt: the Supreme Court is determined to make it impossible for capitalism to reform itself in this country, and thus prolong its precarious existence. To all those liberals and the more intelligent conservatives, who hoped for a "progressive" capitalism, guided and ruled by a regenerated United States Supreme Court, this decision says: "Abandon Ye All Hope." No wonder they are shocked.

Some years ago a Professor of Law at Harvard University, an upholder of our constitutional system and an admirer of the United States Supreme Court, said in an article describing the functions of that august body, that the United States Supreme Court was in effect the American House of Lords, and that its function was to interpret the United States Constitution in a manner so as to embody in our fundamental law the views of the intelligent leaders of the capitalist class as to how the country ought to be governed. That article was written during what has been called the Progressive Era of the United States Supreme Court, and was probably a correct description of the Supreme Court in progressive mood.

This means that at best this country is governed by a House of Lords, for which no provision is made in the United States Constitution, instead of by Congress and the President as therein provided, or by the people of the United States as is commonly supposed.

But the Supreme Court is not always on its best behavior. And when it is in one of its reactionary moods the American people have probably the worst possible government known to any modern civilized country, with the exception of those dominated by Mussolini and Hitler. At its worst, the rule of the Supreme Court is not only vicious but stupid. It is that stupidity which on such occasions, shocks its more intelligent supporters.

The Court was in such a mood in the Harding "back-to-normalcy" days, and it has been in such a mood during its Anti-New Deal phase. It is very significant that during both these eras the Court's hardest blows have been aimed at labor; and in both periods the attack took the form of declaring minimum wage laws unconstitutional. The latest decision is particularly vicious because in order to render it the majority of the Court had to state, in effect, that it had been thoroughly dishonest in making the first minimum wage law decision in 1923. This is particularly stupid because it comes at the end of a series of other decisions in which social legislation has been held unconstitutional on the pretext that it diminishes the power of the states, thereby attempting to pose as the defender of states' rights—a pretext which is now belied by its abrogating a legislative right of the States which even conservatives like Chief Justice Hughes must insist the States possess.

The history of these two decisions, and a comparison of the two, is extremely instructive. The first case involved a Federal statute passed by Congress in 1918, providing for the fixing of minimum wages for women and children in the District of Columbia, which is governed directly by Congress as the law-making power. It was then hoped by "progressives" and "liberals" that this statute would be a model for the country, and would be copied by all the States, thus introducing a progressive era in capitalism. But these progressives and liberals had reckoned without the nation's final arbiters—the United States Supreme Court. When that Court got around to it, during the blessed days of the Harding Administration, it decided to put its foot down on these beginnings of "progressive capitalism"—convinced, presumably, that progress and capitalism are incompatible. So at least a majority of the Court decided—for the decision was made five to four. Chief Justice Taft and Justices Holmes, Brandeis and Sanford, dissented; they claimed that there was nothing in the Constitution permitting the Supreme Court to invalidate the law. The decision was a body blow to progressive capitalism at the time, but we were then—in 1923, on the eve of the "boom"—in the "new economic era"—which was supposed to spell prosperity for all, and the country did not mind how reactionary capitalism was. "Liberals" and "progressives" were duly shocked, but did nothing about it. In the prosperous days that followed, the matter was completely forgotten. But when the depression came, it was found that the lack of minimum wage laws and other social legislation had considerable to do with bringing on the depression. And when the devil of capitalism was sick, the devil a saint would be. Or if not exactly a saint, at least a progressive devil. The New Deal, therefore, made attempts, both Federal and State, to pass minimum wage laws in one form or another. One of these was the New York State Minimum Wage Law for Women.

In framing the new law, the legislators had, of course, to reckon with the Supreme Court decision. Nevertheless, they hoped to overcome it for two reasons: In the first place, it was hoped that the Supreme Court, having learned something from the depression, would be in a more "progressive" frame of mind; and, secondly, the New York legislators took care to frame the law in such a manner as to meet the particular ground upon which the Supreme Court had invalidated the District of Columbia law in 1923. That decision had said that the reason for the invalidation of the Act of Congress was that the Act provided that women should be paid a *living wage*. This, the Court said, means that the wage would have no relation to a "fair" compensation for the services rendered or the "fair" volume of these services. The Supreme Court now holds not only that neither the federal nor the state government has the right to provide for a *living wage* for women; but also neither can they provide for *fair compensation* to be paid to women for services rendered; nor compel any employer to pay women the *fair value* of their services. In so doing, the Court gives the lie direct to the reason it gave for its earlier decision. And the Court exposes the viciousness of the capitalist system, and the hopelessness of any basic reform by what the upholders of the present order are pleased to call "constitutional methods."

No wonder the upholders of the present system are shocked and worried! This decision proves that the Harvard professor was wrong when he thought that this country is ruled by a House of Lords which runs the country in accordance with the views of intelligent capitalists. This decision proves that this country is run by a House of Lords gone mad.

How to curb the insane rulers of this country is the principal problem before the American working class today. Whether, and how far, it can count upon a solution of this problem or any other elements in the social structure of American society is the question upon which its attention is now centered.

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Who Backs The Black Legion?

Henry Ford's Duke of Michigan

JOHN L. SPIVAK

The Black Legion is fascism in action. It is organized, armed reactionary terror directed against Jews, Catholics, Negroes, trade unionists, Communists. The earmarks of Nazi thinking and violence are there. This sinister organization has already spread through Michigan, Ohio and Indiana.

There is a lot of talk about "liberty" in this election campaign. Yet the story of the Black Legion—an armed threat to liberty—is being hushed up. In the following article John L. Spivak, who is in Detroit on the trail of the Black Legion, explains why. He describes the dominant role in Michigan politics of "the Duke of Michigan," Harry Bennett, head of Henry Ford's secret service. He reveals the control of Black Legion evidence by a grand jury consisting of one man. *He also tells why the Republicans who rule the state of Michigan and the Democrats who rule in Washington evade the Black Legion issue like the plague. Capitalist politicians are busy hushing up the Black Legion story. If liberty means anything it means the immediate exposure and abolition of a fascist organization like the Black Legion.*—THE EDITORS.

DETROIT.

THE industrial and political ramifications of the terroristic Black Legion are too widespread for Michigan's officials to risk a thorough investigation. Their plan now is to kill the story as quickly as possible before it gets out of hand and involves too many important people.

The entire story cannot be suppressed. It has gone too far now in national and international publicity. But the tories will try. The men employed as tools by others, as yet undisclosed, will be indicted and sent up to prison. Statements will be issued that now the Black Legion has been broken up. Everything will return to normal. And the Black Legion will continue strong; it will branch out; and the officials and other leaders who are sitting back on the keg of dynamite that almost exploded, will remain unexposed and unhampered. That is what the reactionaries desire.

To understand what is happening in the suppression of the Black Legion investigation, it is necessary to understand a little of the industrial and political set-up of the entire State of Michigan.

We must also keep in mind that state and national election campaigns are under way. The Black Legion oath bound its members to fight Jew, Catholic, Negro and Communist; but news of its activities has chiefly involved anti-Catholicism so far. Comparatively little in the way of exposures of the Legion's activity against Negroes, Jews, Communists and militant trade unionists, has appeared to date. The revelations so far have dealt with the Black Legion's attack against "the Roman hierarchy," as they are fond of terming it.

So strong is this anti-Catholic sentiment developed by the Legion that it is generally admitted now by officials in charge of the investigations which have sprung up like mushrooms all over the state that the Legion has gained several hundred members in Detroit alone since the exposé. This gain has been due chiefly to the assurances of the Black Legion members that the whole hullabaloo is a "Catholic plot." They adduce as evidence of it that Governor Fitzgerald is a Catholic, State's Attorney Crowley who is conducting the investigation, is also a Catholic, and so is Judge James A. Chenot, the one-man grand jury. The whole thing is the hands of Catholics, the Black Legion argues. Actually, so far as I was able to ascertain, the only Catholic is the Attorney General.

This Catholic issue is of paramount importance to the politicians running for office. They do not want to antagonize the anti-Catholics on the one hand or the Catholics on the other by making an issue of it. The election is too near. They would prefer to see the whole thing dropped. And they are also worried about the effects of the investigation upon the industrial barons.

The State of Michigan is pretty much controlled by the automotive industry. The state is almost wholly Republican. The few footloose Democrats are so inconsequential that scarcely anyone pays much attention to them. The Democrats have a few communities and a few public officials in minor places. The state press is almost entirely Republican.

Under such a set-up, if the Black Legion story, which attracted international attention and brought a host of outside correspondents into Michigan, can be quieted down sufficiently to get rid of the outside newspapermen, the local press can be depended upon either to play down the story or to kill it entirely. And this is precisely what is being done now.

The Republican Party itself in the State of Michigan is pretty much controlled by the automotive manufacturers. Chief of this controlling influence is an ex-sailor named Harry Bennett, the head of Henry Ford's "personnel division." Actually he is the organizer and head of the Ford Secret Service, the most amazing private secret service in history. Bennett has his fingers everywhere and politicians are terrified of him and seek his friendship. What Bennett says, goes in Michigan.

Bennett is a rather presentable man in his early forties, and stories of his power are whispered all over the state. He sits in a small room in the basement of the executive offices of the Ford Motor Company with a picture of his charming seventeen-year-old daughter on his desk and a pistol to his left. When entertaining or interviewing anybody—from spies to the highest officials of the state who come to ask for favors—he is fond of placing a pencil upright in a holder and practising shooting with the pistol. At the other end of the room is a small metal receiving tray which catches the bullets as he fires them. Bennett is an excellent shot. He likes to shoot the point off the pencil—and does.

This is the man who, backed by the vast fortune of a multi-millionaire automobile manufacturer, sits in his unpretentious office and pulls the wires that run the political life of Michigan.

What Bennett's connection or interest in the Black Legion is, has not been brought out and never will be brought out by the officials in the State of Michigan. It doesn't matter who the officials are, whether state legislature or the Governor himself. Bennett controls them, and they are in fear of him.

WHEN Dayton Dean, who, his wife says, was head of the Black Legion's "Death Squad," pumped five .45 caliber bullets into the body of Charles A. Poole, a young W.P.A. worker, and the police started a roundup of the Black Legion, they had no notion of the ramifications of the terroristic outfit. The fantastic facts that came out within forty-eight hours after the story broke and spread to the four corners of the earth, got out of hand. It was too late to do anything about it then. Detroit was already swarming with newspapermen.

The excitement in Michigan was intense. New developments broke hourly: the Bullet Club in Pontiac, various unexplained deaths, arsons, floggings. Reporters, local and from distant cities, ran all over the place demanding news or digging up new facts themselves. The politicians were obviously worried. They did not know where it would lead nor whose membership card would be found next. It took them over a week to collect their wits. By that time forces which apparently were more powerful than the whole legal machinery of the state made their desires known that the story be killed as soon as possible.

This offered little difficulty in Michigan. The state has one of the prettiest set-ups for achieving a thing like this. The State of Michigan is almost totalitarian with all the pretenses of democracy: it is ruled by one man: Henry Ford rules through his man

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Harry Bennett as a feudal overlord ruled. Legal control has its nucleus in the one-man grand jury idea. This idea came in handy to Harry Bennett, Duke of Michigan, before and it is proving very handy with the present Black Legion investigation.

A grand jury is supposed to be exactly what it says—"grand," a "big jury" consisting of twenty-three persons who hear the evidence and hand down indictments. The State of Michigan still has this "grand jury" for state matters, but some years ago the employers' association came to the conclusion that sometimes a grand jury becomes "unwieldy." People may get on it who may not jump through the hoop when the whip cracks. On the pretense that it would save money for the impoverished state run by the automobile manufacturers, an act was put over by the state legislature making it possible to have a *one-man* grand jury in a county. This one man hears all the evidence; he alone decides whether to hand down indictments or not. If he decides the evidence does not warrant indictments, the matter ends there and all the material gathered is buried in the secrecy of the one-man grand jury. Anyone who gives out any grand jury information can go to jail for contempt of court.

During the bank scandals of Detroit in 1933, the earls and barons of Michigan used the one-man grand jury very nicely. No indictments were handed down. Since then a federal grand jury has investigated the same people and some thirty indictments have been handed down and three men convicted. The man who killed the state's case against the bankers was Assistant State's Attorney Chester P. O'Hara, who is now handling the Black Legion evidence before another one-man grand jury.

Grand jury proceedings are supposed to be ecret. Because of the widespread interest in the banking scandal, the one-man grand jury was made a public Roman holiday, though the state's attorney's office knew it was illegal. The people wanted a show and they got it. If indictments had been turned in they would have been thrown out of court because the whole procedure was illegal.

With this sort of a set-up where one man, whose political life depends upon the Duke of Michigan and his associates, has the power to hand down indictments and weigh all the evidence and omit evidence which he considers "insufficient," the State of Michigan launched its investigation into the Black Legion.

The judge who was picked to be the one-man grand jury is James E. Chenot. While Chenot was prosecutor, killings occurred at the Ford plant. Chenot investigated the affair and could find no evidence warranting indictments. Chenot is known and is generally accepted as "Harry Bennett's man." When he ran for office two things occurred. The underworld rallied to a man to support him and it is generally accepted and admitted in political circles that the shady characters "down river" raised $200,000 within 48 hours to put Chenot on the bench. Secondly, because of his able cooperation at the time of the investigation into the Ford plant killings during which time he worked hand in glove with Harry Bennett, he became known as Henry Ford's choice for the job. P. S.—He got the job.

When Chenot was appointed the one-man grand jury in the Black Legion case he immediately called in the attorney general of the state, the assistant attorney general and everybody else connected with the case from the prosecution angle and issued a statement:

> Every possible precaution will be taken to protect witnesses who testify before the jury [he said solemnly]. I have control of the proceedings in this court. Anyone who violates the secrecy of this grand jury will go to jail.

There was no misunderstanding the Judge. He wanted no more news appearing to keep the story alive. The names of 500 members of the Black Legion, their membership cards and the fact that many of them were high officials in the state and the county, were now in the possession of the Grand Jury and could not be made public. It was the prettiest way to protect certain officials and keep the scandal from spreading that could have been devised. The mouths of everyone connected with the case from the county prosecutor to the attorney general—from the lone policeman on the beat who might learn something, to the Commissioner of State Police and his men—all were effectively silenced. There is no appeal to the Governor even for a pardon when the court sentences anyone for contempt of court—and there is practically no limit to the sentence.

It is obvious that the grand jury is manipulated by the higher-ups for whatever, at the time, best suits their purposes. When it becomes necessary for them to have the grand jury open to satisfy the people, the grand jury hearings were open, though this made them illegal. Now, when it is necessary to keep the hearings secret lest some of the evidence reach into places they wish to protect, when the hearings may be sufficient to force the federal government to step in, the grand jury becomes secret—and only one man decides who is to be indicted and what evidence is valid. The grand jury system in Michigan is nothing more than a plaything to be manipulated by the industrial and political leaders behind the scenes.

The effect of this announcement was obvious: newspapermen had been playing the story for all it was worth; they had given columns and pages to it by following up tips, individuals, leads given them by the investigators. Suddenly they were left high and dry and dependent upon themselves to keep the story alive. The chief sources of information were in the hands of the one-man grand jury. Out-of-town newspapermen gradually left the scene. The local papers—all of them Republican—slowly started to play down the story. It was the first and very effective step to kill the whole story before too many widely-known politicians and the automotive barons themselves became involved.

THE history of the organization of the terroristic Black Legion is well known. Harry Bennett, Duke of Michigan, knows it. The one-man grand jury knows it. The Attorney General, the county prosecutor, the Governor know it. I know it. But it is one thing to know it and another thing to prove it. The man who originally organized the Black Legion was one of the highest state officials in Michigan and is at the present time one of the highest state officials. His name and the names of other high officials who met in the state's offices with him to organize it—high officials who are still high officials—have not been brought out. Some of them may be brought out because the man who originally organized it has aroused the Duke of Michigan's antagonism. His head may roll as a result, unless he will be asked to resign quietly and save another scandal.

Without mentioning names because of the absence of documentary proof, some facts may be presented: the terroristic Black Legion was organized in one of the high state offices in Lansing, Michigan, in the fall of 1931, after the Ku Klux Klan had been pretty much shattered. This high state official has political ambitions and originally organized it to further his own ambitions and without any idea that it would extend and become an interstate affair.

The first meetings were held in the state offices. The Black Legion grew to the point where this politician could command 30,000 members to vote as he ordered. The authority was split up by giving county control to other individuals and as a result of his power over the 30,000 members he was appointed to another high political office which he cherished and which he now holds.

Subsequently the Black Legion was taken over by another and much more powerful organization which now controls it. It is the safeguarding of this second organization in which those behind it are chiefly interested.

One thing is definite: the Democrats in the state, fully aware of the ramifications of the Black Legion, are anxious for a federal investigation which could blow up the entire Republican control. The Republicans are just as anxious to avoid a federal investigation, for at present the federal government is Democratic. This is also one of the chief reasons why Republican State's Attorney Crowley jumped into the investigation—lest the Democratic county prosecutor manage to get the federal authorities into it and thus take the investigators out of local control.

The federal authorities on the other hand do not want to stir up a hornet's nest just before the presidential campaign. There are too many Klansmen and anti-Catholics in the South so they are sidestepping it and trusting that too much of a stink does not come out. The only way the full Black Legion story will ever be broken and the real higher-ups behind it brought into the limelight and their motives exposed, will be when organized popular pressure demands it so relentlessly that officials cannot crawl out of a probe.

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Spain's Collective Farms

ILYA EHRENBOURG

ON the streets of Toledo history meets life. The monasteries of Toledo are as tall as skyscrapers. Behind their mute walls, El Greco's effeminate sufferers still wriggle tortuously and flutter. Outside half-crazed old women mumble little-understood prayers. . . .

Suddenly a donkey appears on the street. A peasant is carrying wine into town. The smell of freshly-plowed earth drenches the air. The village bursts into the city—life into history.

What happened in Toledo last spring? The old women will tell you about the Holy Virgin—the one painted on the gates of the monastery—who, no longer able to endure the sins of the godless, wept bitterly. (How should they know, the poor souls, that there is a water pipe skilfully hidden in the back of the sensitive Virgin?) But that is not all that happened. On the square, not far away from the tearful Madonna, a young, happy-go-lucky lad, a member of the Federation of Agricultural Workers, was shot by the fascists. Before his last gasp, the youth cried out: "We shall yet get land!" His words resounded like an echo among the toilers of Toledo and made their hearts beat faster.

The café *Cervantes*. Ancient knights with spears are painted on the walls. People drink wine and talk heatedly. What are they discussing? "Sound" economics? The eternal struggle between art and life? No: they discuss collective farms, agricultural laws and workdays. Where am I? Where do Toledo, El Greco and history fit into this picture?

It is raining. The Civil Guards just rushed by. Water streamed from their tricornered hats. They ran to defend the land from those who want land.

Toledo is surrounded by meadows, fields and gardens. Who owns the fields? Count Romanones. Who owns the bulls? Count Romanones. Who owns the olive trees, vineyards, meadows? Count Romanones. Everything belongs to him. And if it isn't Romanones it's Sanchez Cabezudo.

"Does all that belong to them?"

The peasant smiles: "No. It used to belong to them."

It began in the district of Cenicientos three months ago. Early on March 9 the peasants descended upon Romanones' estate, disarmed the guards and wrote out an act about the transfer of the land to the *"Comunidad."* A few days later they sent representatives to the peasants of the neighboring village, Nombela, with an offer to help them take over Sanchez Cabezudo's 800 hectares.

Then other villages followed. In the district of Toledo there are thirty-five collective farms; 2,400 families began life anew. Before, they had neither land nor mules—not even a corner they could call their own. They worked for the counts and marquis. The peasants rarely saw their bosses, who lived in Paris or Madrid and visited their estates only during the hunting season. The managers exploited the peasants. They paid them two or three pesetas a day—enough for watery soup with bread, rags and beds made of straw. The contracts that the managers made with peasants, stated: "Work is to start at sunrise and end at sunset."

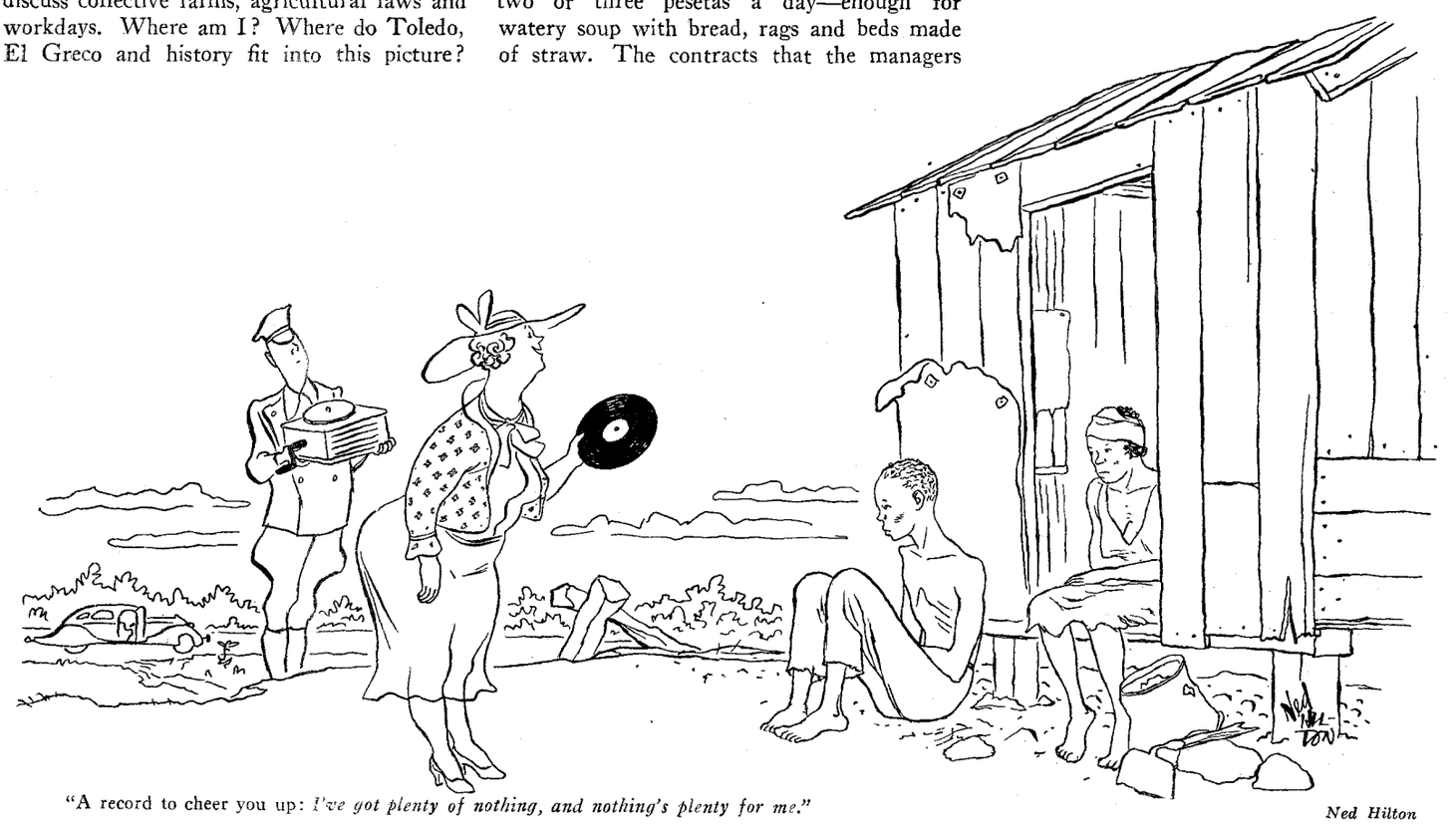
I have in front of me a heap of papers—inventories of the estates that the peasants have taken over. This is what the peasants of the village of Camana wrote:

"On March 28, 1936, the agricultural workers of the village of Camana decided that they had starved long enough, so they occupied this estate of 1,100 hectares. . . ." A detailed description of all the things that they found on the estate follows.

The peasants of the village Guadamuz began their act of transfer thus: "Although we occupied the estate, the guards bear witness to the fact that we have insulted no one either by word or by deed. . . ."

REPRESENTATIVES of the *municipalidad* asked the peasants whether they wanted to divide the land they had seized or work it collectively. About 88 percent of the peasants in the district of Toledo decided upon a collective. "We are *kolkhozniks,"* a dark-eyed youth from Malapica told me. "We have a *Koljoz,"* said the peasants of Villamiel.

Thus the fame of a distant country where the peasants live a new and happy life reached the villages of Castille. In some villages the peasants listen at night to broadcasts describing the new life of *kolkhozniks* in the Ukraine or the Caucasus. Officially



"A record to cheer you up: *I've got plenty of nothing, and nothing's plenty for me.*"

Ned Hilton

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the collective farms are called village cooperatives. In everyday life, however, they are referred to as *Comunidad* or *Koljoz*.

The first collective farms in Spain were organized two years ago. In the village of Noves there were eighty-eight landless families. They rented 700 hectares of land and organized a collective farm. In Malapica, the peasants were receiving two pesetas a day. They, too, organized a collective farm. The first year the members of the collective made six pesetas for each workday. Last year, however, the collective could not meet its debts so the government took it over and paid out to the peasants only one peseta, seventy centimos a day. The village is hungry. But the peasants know whom to blame. They told me of their belief in collective farming: "Now," they say, "things will be better. After all Azana is not Gil Robles. Now we shall stop paying. . . ."

When they took leave of me they all shouted: *"Viva la Rusia!"* This was not only a message to a distant, strange and beautiful land, but also an answer to the fascist atrocities—a fighting slogan, an oath.

Some of the collective farms are already fairly well off. The collective of Novalmoral de la Mota has 25,000 sheep. In the newspaper The Agricultural Worker one often sees photographs reminiscent of Eisenstein's film *The General Line*. Here is a photo of mules. Underneath, the inscription: "The collective farm takes the best care of animals." Here are women collective-farmers grazing goats. Here are young lads on the backs of donkeys. Their fists are raised above their heads. They smile. They are the *kolkhozniks* from Villamiel.

The farmers of the Mostoles collective already have their own orchard and truck gardens. They ship fruit and vegetables to Madrid. Where the landowners used to hunt hares there are now corn fields. The chairman of the collective, Modesto Montero, tells me: "We have plenty of mules already. We're thinking of buying a tractor. . . ."

The fields are serene. Sheep graze in the hills. The trees are budding. But this is a surface tranquillity. There is tension everywhere. Collective farms are not easily gained by the Spanish peasants. They have to struggle bitterly for each stretch of land. No one helps them. Intuitively they search for the new life. The fascists shoot at them from behind corners and the Civil Guard protects the fascists. Lawyers discuss the fate of the League of Nations or Unamuno's prose style. The peasants, however, are on guard. When the children of a collective farm see an approaching automobile they raise their fists. This is both greeting and warning. When I reached Nombela, I was surrounded by a group of young *kolkhozniks* who were guarding the collective's office. Having found out who I was they raised their fists: *"U.H.P."* Then they began to tell me about guns, landowners and fascists.

The Spanish rulers aren't bothered by principles. A visiting card, a telephone from an uncle and graft go a long way in that country. Thus, many large estates are not included in the list of the "Institute of Agrarian Reforms." Governors send gendarmes with machine-guns to defend the wealth of some honorable marquis or count who knows how to pull strings. In the village of Quismond the peasants are starving. They have neither land nor work. At the same time the landowners' fields remain unplowed. Instead of tractors the peasants are treated to machine guns.

The agricultural reforms are carried on from below. Every day the peasants seize pieces of land. Yesterday it was in Extramadura. Today, in Toledo and Salamanca. After the peasants occupy the land, the representatives of the Institute of Agrarian Reforms come around and legalize the transfer to the collective farm.

The deputy of the Cortes, Romanones, had an estate *El Robledo*. The peasants were starving in the neighboring village, Manasalbas; they had no land and the Count would not give them any work. *El Robledo* consists of 6,000 hectares of which only 100 were plowed. Peasants would gather some wood on the estate or hunt for a hare and if caught, would be immediately shot by the guards. The luckier ones would be flung into the Toledo jail. The Governor did not want to insult the Count, who supplied him with civil guards. But the peasants of Manasalbas disarmed the guards and occupied the estate. After taking inventory, they stated that they found in the kitchen some ham and a sack of potatoes, which they would be glad to return to the Count. "We don't want some one else's goods. We only want the land." Now the peasants of Manasalbas have three collective farms.

"Neither for me nor for anyone else." It takes many decades for olive trees to bear fruit. The owners of the large *El Sotillo* and *Dehezilia* estates cut the trees so that the collective farmers would not get them. The peasants of the village of Kanyas came in time: the barbarians of higher learning were caught red-handed before they had finished.

It is no longer the laws that count, but the size of their guns. The peasants of Nombella organized a farm militia. They call it the "Red Army." It owns several hunting rifles.

The landowners have rented out the land to the kulaks; having escaped, the kulaks carry on their fight. There are ninety kulaks in Nombella, all of them armed. In Almoradiel, crying "Long Live Christ!" the kulaks attacked the village Soviet. They wounded several, with their 260 rifles and 250 guns. In Boveda and Manchera the kulaks shot at the members of the executive committee of the collective farm.

Escalona was once a fortress. Now it is a village populated by farmhands. You can hardly see it. It is hidden behind the walls of the fortress. The narrow streets surround a wide square. Donkeys, children. The chairman of the municipal Soviet showed me a gun: he knows the ways of the local kulaks. It was a bright spring day. The square was noisy and gay, crowded by peasants from Escalona, Ismonda and Umbella. The local kulaks were sitting in the café *Alberche*. They were being treated by the former chairman of the municipal Soviet, the notorious *El Bajeraco*—the shrewd one. Four shots were heard; four peasants fell dead. Four widows, seventeen orphans. It sounded strange to hear our "You fell victims in a bloody struggle . . ." sung in Spanish. . . .

The body of the Communist Filiberto Rodriguez was carried away by the Young Communists. The bullet made no error; Filiberto was the idol of the village. A peasant from Quismond made the following speech over his grave:

> Filiberto, dear friend, we shall not forget you. Nor shall we forget those who have killed you. The world will be ours anyway. We shall shed our blood so that truth may triumph. Sleep peacefully, friend, comrade, Communist.

Many years ago Mikhail Svetlov wrote a poem about Granada in which a Ukrainian Red Army man says:

> I left my hut,
> I went to fight
> To return the land
> To the peasants of Granada. . . .

In those days the peasants of Granada had not yet thought of land. But great poetry reacts not only to the present but also foresees the future. The October heroes paid with their generous blood not only for the Russian peasants and workers, but also for the land of the Spanish peasants, for these *Koljoz* which came into being many years later, a long way from Tsaritsin, in a different corner of Europe.

Svetlov's poems were translated into Spanish. But the Spanish peasants have their own poets. One of them, Sancho Perez, wrote a poem about Stalin. I am not a poet and it is almost impossible for me to communicate the beauty of his lines. They are at once naive and full of wisdom. They are an appropriate conclusion for the story of the first act of the Spanish Revolution:

> Children wept, donkeys brayed
> The peasants lived very poorly.
> There was one man, he smoked a pipe.
> His name was Stalin.
> He lived far away where there is snow in the summer,
> Where you cannot even get on a donkey.
> He said: "The olives grew for all.
> Why insult anyone?"
> He wanted everybody to drink wine.
> He wanted children to laugh.
> I cleaned my rifle today
> And said to my mother: "Stalin."
> My mother is old and ignorant.
> I told her one word: "Stalin."
> It is like saying "Mother."
> It is like saying "Comrade."
> If I'm shot by the enemy
> I shall give my rifle to my younger brother
> One should know how to die
> One should know how to fight.
> Stalin thinks about Moscow.
> I think about my village.
> Our world is one.
> Our sorrows are one.
> Our victory is one.

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The Guild Goes to Town

S. W. GERSON

HISTORIANS of the future, seeking to learn the dynamics of our day, can say with assurance that Richard Harding Davis was a serious factor in the newspaper industry up to May 30, 1936. On that day the venerable ghost was finally laid.

The ceremony was as brief as it was simple. It consisted of a majority and two minority reports to the third annual convention of the American Newspaper Guild at the Hotel Astor. The majority report, calling for Guild affiliation with the American Federation of Labor, was carried, 84 to 5, and the Davis wraith forthwith beat a hasty retreat to the dim recesses where publishers keep the romantic shades of the business.

American publishers have only themselves to blame if the Davis tradition has finally been banished from the city room and reporters and rewrite men voted to align themselves with bricklayers and glassblowers. Romance and bylines never did pay for pork chops and the situation wasn't helped by the stubborn publishers' refusal to treat with the Guild in the days when it was still a cross between a drinking club and a welfare society. Whacks on the head from the Milwaukee police and injunctions from Jersey justice probably assisted considerably. People who simply lifted a supercilious eyebrow at trade unionism in 1933 were in 1935 convinced that the Guild, *volens-nolens,* was a trade union *de facto.*

Surprisingly little opposition to affiliation manifested itself at the convention. Most of the delegates came instructed to vote to join the A.F. of L. Such dissent as there was arose not from objections to becoming identified with the trade-union movement, but from a criticism of the present craft set-up of the Federation. Recent events have recorded themselves sharply on the minds of newspapermen. The opening sentence of the majority report, which may well become historic, indicates this clearly.

> The best and lasting interests—it reads—of the members of the American Newspaper Guild, composed of newspaper men who work for a living, is bound up with the general welfare of all workers in the nation.

We are perhaps too close to the convention to see it in perspective. Certainly, for the industrial workers of the country who have long felt themselves somewhat isolated from the white-collar groups, it is a distinct victory. Apart from that, Guild affiliation with the A.F. of L. will have repercussions in circles wider than the organized labor movement. It will help break down the Chinese wall that has hitherto existed between the man in overalls and the man at the desk. It will help the middle classes orientate themselves in the direction of an alliance with labor against reaction. The Guild decision may very well be one of the important factors in creating the necessary unity between the Man at the Lathe, the Man with the Hoe and the Man at the Typewriter. In the deepest sense of the word, therefore, the Guild decision should be hailed not only as pro-labor but also as anti-fascist.

All major decisions of the convention were settled in the same progressive spirit. Resolutions in favor of Farmer-Labor action, curbing of the power of the Supreme Court and for advanced labor legislation were adopted with little or no opposition. Election of Heywood Broun as president and Jonathan Eddy as executive secretary clearly sprang from the determination of the delegates to maintain progressive officers in the administration to carry out progressive policies.

Decisions affecting internal organization followed the same lines.. A constitution, representing the distilled but doubtful virtues of nearly 100 craft unions and submitted by Robert M. Buck of Washington, never reached the floor of the convention. Expansion along democratic lines was the motif of all discussions on organization.

Formal admission into the A.F. of L. is a matter of weeks. That the Guild will have delegates at the Tampa convention of the Federation is virtually agreed upon. What forces it will support there are already foreshadowed by repeated Guild resolutions in favor of industrial unionism. Already there are indications that the big-wigs of the A.F. of L. are well aware of the peculiarly strategic character of its newest affiliate.

Of the overwhelmingly progressive character of the third annual convention of the Guild there can be no doubt.

They're getting the point. One story, which went the rounds of the convention corridors and which we hereby hand on to the readers of THE NEW MASSES, seems to confirm the idea.

It seems that Bill Davey, a Guild organizer, and J. Nash McCrea, a Republican in politics and at present chairman of The Wisconsin News strike committee, were having beer and skittles one night at a Milwaukee tavern after a long, hard day. Both were tired and dusty. "Look at me, Bill," said old McCrea. "Look at me. I look like a lumpen-proletarian, don't I? Ah, but you're all wrong, my boy," and he wagged an admonishing finger. "I'm not a lumpen-proletarian. I'm just an old lumpen-Republican."

Jottings on a Salesbook

ALBERT MORTON

Earning bread in the unbiblical sweat of other people's feet
Sing me the unheroic saga of the shoe salesman;
Phrases between customers to make in many weeks a poem,
Poems to make delight or poems to make a union;
The salesman poet lines the right size images the right color
Soundly constructed for mass picketing with rhymes that—
(Good afternoon, Madam. Yes of course, Madam.
Cheaper? Surely.—The leather may be stiff, but
See the fit, the snug grip at the arch, Madam)
Saying the same words in the same way in the same store
To different ladies, it's carfare to the park
Some green air for the kids
And rent not more than one week late—
(Yes, Mr. Hanson, 12 tonight, yes, Mr. Hanson)
Gather up phrases now, the harvest interlude,
Phrases to sow in tired minds to make in many weeks a union,
Stand with a statue smile and gather phrases—
(Yes, Mr. Hanson, 9 tomorrow, sure, Mr. Hanson)
Sure, tilt a last year's shoe to this year's angles
Smiling an all year smile, go home and sell your son
On overcoatless winters, soles with holes;
Sure, go home and smile my wife
Into the thin coat with the frayed collar—
You in the next section, comrade,
How long before we quit
This amiable drawing back of lips?

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Social Work Comes of Age

SIMON DONIGER

IT IS probably unfair to look for realistic awareness, clarity of analysis or a sense of direction on major social issues at a National Conference of Social Work. For in addition to the usual liberal confusions, social work suffers from a series of contradictions peculiarly its own: its origin, function and its misapplied and over-generalized techniques.

The origins of social work stem from the church and parish. While the average social worker has a tendency to overlook this fact, the boardwalk and convention halls at Atlantic City last week bore witness to this relationship—they were full of church uniforms, priests of all denominations, nuns, members of the Salvation Army.

Social work has been used as a cushion between the devastating effects of a ruthless economic order and its victims. Social workers refer to this function sentimentally, as the "alleviation of human suffering." In economic terms, it is the function which places at industry's disposal a surplus population ready to step in whenever needed and easily disposed of when it is no longer useful—without the worry that the cast-off surplus will "actually" starve. Finally, there remains the dangerous tendency to attribute the major tragedies suffered by one-fifth of our population to individual inadequacy—a tendency which, though it is receding, nevertheless still muddies a clear view of the problems faced by social workers.

These considerations and confusions explain much of the opening address of the President of the 63rd Annual Conference of Social Work at Atlantic City (May 24-30), the Very Reverend Monsignor Robert Fr. Keegan, Executive Director of the Catholic Charities of New York City. In one breath, Monsignor Keegan spoke on the need for security and in the next on the spiritual elements in life which were more important than material security.

> There are those who cry: "Back to Rugged Individualism." It would be an unprofitable adventure. Some favor a Communistic experiment. We have too much faith in spiritual values and human rights to go the Russian way.

And in the same vein, Monsignor Keegan expounded on the use that the exploiting classes have made of the state as an instrument of power while he expressed faith in the Supreme Court as an instrument to curb the state from assuming too much power. Thus:

> It is not easy for democratic government to rise beyond the control of powerful groups. There is real danger that in so doing it may move definitely in the direction of dictatorship in one form or another. Fortunately, in the case of our American government, the point of departure from democracy would be clearly and boldly indicated by transgressions against the Constitution as interpreted by the Supreme Court.

This in the same week that the Supreme Court declared the New York state minimum wage law unconstitutional!

Monsignor Keegan did not stop there. His solution of the problem of the middle classes was to advocate a return to small ownership, the decentralization of industry:

> The only safeguard for private property ownership as a social institution is a phalanx of middle-class and small property owners. . . . Widespread ownership means a fair chance for wage earning people; an opportunity for the industrious and thrifty man to rise and an opening for youth to reach an independent status. . . . Man does not live by bread alone; neither does a nation. Let us come back to recognize the importance of spiritual values! They are more real and lasting than any profits or wage-rates can be.

Small wonder that The New York Herald Tribune captioned its report of Monsignor Keegan's speech, "Security Plan Perils Cited to Social Workers."

Mayor LaGuardia, too, appeared before the convention, the "liberal" mayor whose police had clubbed pickets on the New York waterfront and who now urged protective labor legislation, a constitutional amendment to curb the Supreme Court, the regulation of commerce and industry. "We are going to a new order. . . . We shall come there through legislation on old-age pensions, through child labor amendments, through national unemployment insurance."

There were other speakers. Edith Abbott, president-elect of the Conference for 1937, director of the Graduate School of Social Service Administration of the University of Chicago, decried partisan politics and pleaded for civil-service status for public-welfare employes. She demanded that both major political parties include a civil-service plank in their platforms—though both parties have included such planks in their platforms for the past twenty years and have done nothing about them. Or Professor Parker T. Moon of Columbia University who discussed war and omitted the fact that war itself is a result and not a cause. "Capitalism will crumble and Communism will come and that would be an unspeakable tragedy," the professor observed. His solution—a League of Nations and the satisfying of the "unsatisfied nations," specifying as such the three fascist countries, Germany, Italy, Japan.

Fortunately, the story of social work does not end here. The depression catapulted into social work a new force: workers from fields unrelated to social work, students, professionals unhampered by its traditions, able to approach and face and attack the realities of our social order. Aided by this new group, there has grown up an organized rank-and-file movement which sees clearly and logically the problems of social welfare, of the social worker and of the professional generally and the alternatives that the social worker faces in his attempt to carry through his program.

THE National Coordinating Committee of Social Service Employe Groups is barely two and a half years old. Already its role is an important one; it promises to overshadow the more conservative groups. Allied with it are a few—very few, indeed—in social work who have succeeded in transcending both the handicaps of tradition and the handicaps of their positions. We can count them on the fingers of one hand—Mary Van Kleeck, Director of Industrial Studies of the Russell Sage Foundation, Bertha Reynolds, Associate Director of the Smith College School of Social Work, Dr. Frankwood Williams, until recently medical director of the National Committee for Mental Hygiene, Dr. Harry Lurie, Director of the National Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, New York City. It is to this section of the Conference that one must look for future direction of social work. It is here that one finds the ideological and tactical contradictions resolved and a clear statement of method and purpose outlined, formulated, carried through.

Under the auspices of the National Coordinating Committee of rank-and-file employes one of the most important meetings was held, on "Social Work and Fascism." The meeting was prefaced by a statement of purpose of a committee of rank-and-file workers, outlining in clear and uncompromising terms the present situation in this country—the plight of youth, the regression in child welfare, the attack on the unemployed, the C.C.C.—its militarism and war tendency—the attacks upon the liberties of the people and workers as disclosed by the Black and LaFollette committees, the Tampa flogging, the attacks on social service by the American Manufacturers Association, Boards of Trade, Liberty League. The report concludes that unquestionably "the symptoms of fascism are here but the ideals of social work cannot exist with fascism." To discuss techniques of social work in a time like this is futile. The answer to the problem of social work for the present, at least, is organization along with the labor groups. The interests of social workers and the labor movement are identical, hence the program of social workers must include full utilization of the productive forces of America; the Youth Act and child-labor amendments; adequate unemployment insurance as embodied in the Frazier-Lundeen Bill; adequate relief standards as expressed in the Marcantonio Relief Bill; the right to organize, etc.

This report was followed by a masterly and profoundly moving analysis of fascism

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in Europe and its relation to America, by Mary Van Kleeck, who was greeted by the 2,000 assembled delegates, with a rising ovation. Tracing the development of Italian, German and Austrian fascism to its source of large industry and finance capital, Miss Van Kleeck pointed to the similarity of the situation existing in this country as symbolized by the Republican Party and the Liberty League.

At the same time, Miss Van Kleeck clearly analyzed the role that the Roosevelt administration is playing at the present time and warned the audience that while large industry at present is opposing the Roosevelt administration, they must remember that in Germany too it was the liberals and Social-Democrats who disregarded militant labor tactics; who declined to participate in the general strike and the united front with the Communists—that it was they who were the instrument through which fascism was brought into power; and that the same danger faces us. Only a People's Front, she declared, can prevent the same tragedy in America. She urged, in addition, an amendment to the Judiciary Act which will immediately enable Congress to legislate for the people.

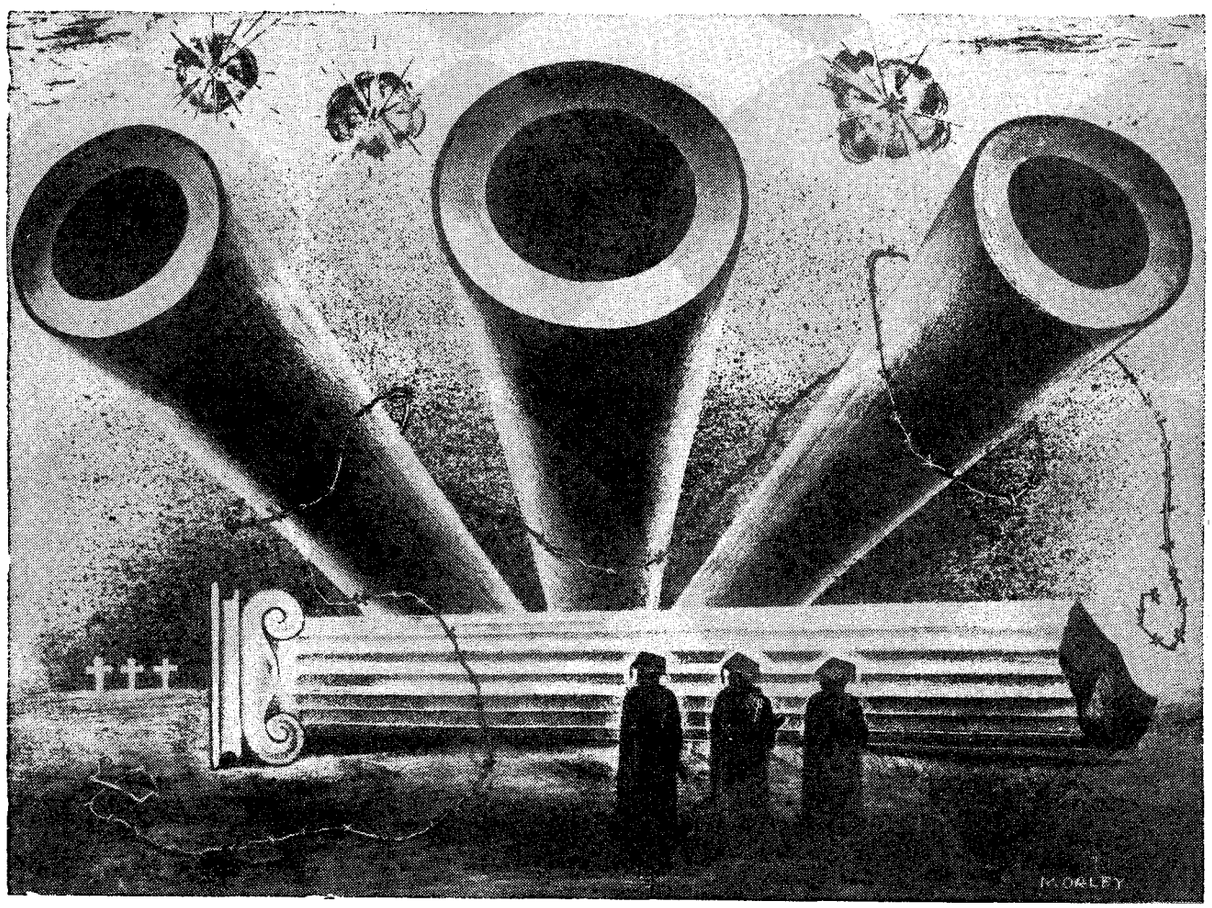
Not less in importance was the meeting arranged under the same rank-and-file group at which Francis Gorman, vice-president of the United Textile Workers of America, outlined some of the organizational problems of American workers, the brutal attacks on unionization and the refusal of the state to give protection to workers. It is these unsolved problems that form the basis for workers' organization not only on an economic but on a political level, and he called on the social workers to ally themselves with those forces which are building a Farmer-Labor Party. Mr. Gorman spoke immediately after Aubrey Williams, Deputy Administrator of the Works Progress Administration, had outlined before the Conference the W.P.A. and its program and readily admitted its dire inadequacies. Harry Lurie found his task of discussing the two papers comparatively easy. As he put it, "Aubrey Williams admits that the present political parties can't and won't give the people what they need, and Francis Gorman gives us a new party that will and must. . . . Neither the Democratic nor the Republican Parties deserve the support of intelligent and honest social workers. The New Deal is grateful to the Supreme Court for helping it solve the contradictions which it has raised and accepts these decisions as those of an undertaker removing its legislative monstrosities."

Earlier, under the auspices of the American League Against War and Fascism, for the first time participating in a conference on social work, Bertha Reynolds stressed the need of social workers relating themselves to larger social issues; she dwelt on the relation of the brutal attacks upon labor and the unemployed by industry to the political and economic situation in this country, and urged social workers to "joint action with workers and all other progressive groups while there is still a little time left."

The same unity, clarity and directness of approach that manifested themselves in all the meetings and discussions of the rank-and-file groups were evident in the meeting on Federal Relief at which Jacob Fisher, chairman of the National Coordinating Committee of Social Service Employe Groups, discussed the relief situation in the United States following the presentation of the same problem by Aubrey Williams.

> No expression of concern by Federal officials with the quality of the moral fiber of our people can any longer conceal the appalling destruction in living standards for large sections of our population which has followed so quickly on the heels of the withdrawal of the federal government from direct relief. In the very state in which we are meeting, the unemployed have been cast upon the tender mercies of local overseers of the poor....

The rank-and-file group is not content with mere expression of philosophy. An intensive campaign for organization within the American Federation of Labor is taking place and is already bearing fruit. In spite of the fact that the entire process of protective organization in social work is no more than two years old, there are already 5,000 social-service employes affiliated with the A.F. of L. This rapid growth of organization is phenomenal. With the emergence of the rank-and-file movement, social work has come of age.



"COMMENCEMENT—1936"

Lithograph by Eugene Morley

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"Life Is M

JOSI

LONG ago, in my freshman year at college, I had to write a classroom composition on what America meant to me. I had just seen Eugene O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape,* and as I sat down to write, it occurred to me that the Hairy Ape's raucous yell before the cowering people on the ship "Speed, that's me. . . . A hundred miles an hour, that's me . . ." was the quintessence of American life. And for years after, the feel

of America was for me bound up emotionally with the unforgettable cry of O'Neill's stoker. Everywhere, always, persistently, relentlessly, the refrain assailed my innermost consciousness: "Speed, that's me. . . . A hundred miles an hour, that's me. . . ."

For almost a year now I have lived and traveled in the Soviet Union, visiting collective and state farms, factories, schools, scientific institutes, talking to peasants, workers, agronomists, officials, students, writers, Red Army men. And if I were asked for the word, the phrase, the expression that to me suggests the quintessence of Soviet life in the winter and spring of 1936, I should unhesitatingly quote Stalin's now famous words at the First All-Union Conference of Stakhanovites:

> Life has improved, Comrades. Life has become more joyous. And when life is joyous, work goes well....

These words, even when unuttered, are heard everywhere, in the most unexpected places, at the most unexpected times. They form the ever recurrent refrain of the great symphony of Soviet contemporaneity. Even when unuttered, they charge the atmosphere, the streets, the shops, the cafés, the fields, the mines and the newspapers with their endless black columns of numbers and graphs.

On the very day I left Moscow, for example, I witnessed a characteristic little scene in the Moscow subway. The train was jammed with children on an outing to the Park of Culture and Rest. The ages ranged from about eight to eleven or twelve. As is the custom in Soviet public conveyances, all the children were seated; the adults, pressed closely together, clung to the metal bars.

In front of me stood an old peasant woman. Out of her brightly colored kerchief peeped a wrinkled smiling face and a pair of young grey eyes. Near her stood a young man in his twenties, dressed in city clothes—obviously her son.

This was her first experience of the subway, and the magnificence of escalator and stations, the glitter of cars and the mystery of automatically opened and closed doors must have got her excited. She Ah'd and Oh'd and shook her head and smacked her tongue and eagerly and uninhibitedly shared her feelings with the people around her. The son, though slightly embarrassed by his mother's lack of restraint—he himself had apparently lived in the city for a long time—looked at her with such an air of pride that one might have taken him for the sole planner, builder and owner of this magic train. I am certain that the fellow actually felt, and perhaps not very wrongly, that the subway was his personal triumph.

Suddenly the woman's eye fell on the children with their flowers and balloons. "O the little doves!" she turned to me, "look at them sitting there like little barins" (lords). The novelty of seeing children treated with such tenderness so touched the old woman that she forgot all about the marvels of the escalator, the train and the automatic doors. "In all my sixty-five years I have never seen anything like it!"

Addressing me all the time as "little father," the old peasant began to tell me how it would be in the old days, when the grown-ups would be "spread out in the seats, with their hands on their stomachs and the young ones would have to show their respect by standing on their weak little feet." She began to reminisce about her own childhood, when she had to go to work for the landlord at the age of eleven for twenty kopecks a day and how she was beaten when she didn't do the work as well as the barin thought she should. These children were fortunate . . . a good life . . . one should be born now....It was a pity she was too old...

The old peasant reminisced so loudly that she attracted everybody's attention. People looked at her, at one another, grinning. These Muscovites, a little *blasé* by now, enjoyed the freshness of the woman's reactions. Their smiles were a mixture of indulgence, amusement and pleasure. The only uncomfortable one was the son; he was as red as a beet. The old woman, however, did not heed his mild efforts to restrain her; all the way to the last stop she kept up her half-talk half-chant about the good new life, her unwillingness to die and her thanks "to Comrade Stalin."

This was my last and lasting impression of the U.S.S.R. of the Spring, 1936.

THE bubbling, blond-haired, blue-eyed little fellow in our coupe is a bizarre combination: Russian Jew, Polish citizen, educated in France and Portgual, working in Algeria, speaking interchangeably all of the European languages including Russian, and dreaming of only one thing—to settle in the Soviet Union and help build socialism.

He had come on a six-day tour, intending, despite all warnings, within the short time at his disposal and without any Soviet contacts, to change his status from tourist to that of resident. Hence the huge pile of baggage, including a tennis racket, a mandolin, a heavy box of books and what-not.

Now he is on his way out, better informed, but not less enthusiastic. He will leave no stone unturned: he will come back to the Soviet Union to live and work there.

I ask him about his fantastically international habitat.

Answer: It was almost impossible for him to enter a Polish secondary school and university. The Polish government schools admit only one percent of Jews. Presumably, that one percent is accepted on the basis of severe, competitive examinations; actually, on the basis of pull and bribes. The few Jews who can afford it send their children abroad to study. But that is only the beginning of the trouble. Suppose a Jew does obtain his training abroad; he still has no chance of utilizing it in his homeland. The low cultural level of Poland's population is notorious, yet there is already an overproduction of intellectuals and professionals. When a vacancy occurs the Pole is given preference—the Jew is kept out. That explains why he had studied in France and Portugal and was working in a medical laboratory in Algeria. But there is no real opportunity for growth in Algeria—neither money nor the atmosphere for scientific research. By god, if he could only get into one of those scientific institutes he visited in Moscow—that's the place to work, to study, to develop. . . .

He interrupts his story with "Say, but how did *you* manage to stay so long in the U.S.S.R.?"

I tell him.

The fellow leaps from his seat, slaps his forehead, rubs his hands—he cries: "That's an idea! Now I've got it!"

The idea is simple. He'll stop off in

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re Joyous"

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Portugal and make arrangements with a paper there. He'll get the Algerian united-front labor paper to give him a commission. He'll try other countries. It should be easy, since he would be paid only for articles actually printed. He'll come back to Moscow loaded with documents. He'll be a correspondent! In addition he will connect up with a scientific institute in Moscow and continue his real work. He knows he'll make himself indispensable. He'll become a Soviet citizen. Maybe his knowledge of languages will help him. . . .

To this modern incarnation of the Wandering Jew, the vaguest suggestion of a possibility of staying and working in the Soviet Union is a source of ineffable joy. He glows with febrile hope all the way to the Polish border.

THE tourists in my coupé are discussing Stakhanov and Stakhanovism. I recall several episodes which they seem to enjoy. One of the tourists is busy jotting down everything I say. This lady is true to form: she has been here about thirty days and now she threatens to write a book telling all about the Soviet Union.

Well, if she really utilizes the stories, I hope she doesn't take it into her head to charge me with plagiarism. There have been such cases, I understand. Anyway, here are some of the stories:

Marfusha and Polia, sisters, are peasants from the Tula region. Since 1924, when they came to Moscow, they have been working in factories—one as fur cutter, the other in a rubber-boot factory. Both had been married and both had been left by their husbands. (This was quite fashionable at one time in the Soviet Union.) Marfusha has three children; Polia, one. They all live in the two rooms adjacent to mine. While the young women go to work, their children are looked after by their grandmother who has been brought from the village.

Before the Stakhanov movement, the earnings of the two women were too low and they could scarcely afford to clothe their large families decently or to provide them with the more expensive foods. A couple of months after the Stakhanov movement started, the income of the two sisters more than doubled. At the same time prices had come down. Before long there was a perceptible change in the apparel, diet, and mood of the family. Meat and butter and white bread now ceased to be luxuries. In the communal kitchen I would now see them preparing bacon and eggs for breakfast—something they had learned from their American neighbor. The general spirit was excellent—less quarreling with neighbors, and less scrapping among kids.

However, once Polia went out with her little daughter Niurochka and brought her back all dolled up in a little fur coat and fur cap. She had spent 125 rubles on the five-year-old child.

Immediately hell broke loose in the house. For two days without stop there was howling and screaming in my neighbors' rooms. When I asked Marfusha what the trouble was, she said:

"My kids insist on 'liquidating' Niurochka —they pinch her and kick her and push her all over the place . . . on account of that fur coat of hers . . . they call her kulak and keep on beating her."

One of the tourists, a melancholy fellow, a hypochandriac, opines: "The irony of Revolution. . . ."

IT WAS in the Big Hall in the Kremlin, during the meeting of the Stakhanovite tractor drivers with the chiefs of the Government and Party. I had been at such meetings before—of cotton growers, beet growers, combine operators and various other Stakhanovites, but I had never reported them in THE NEW MASSES. The truth is I had found it impossible, I lacked the art convincingly to describe the enormous enthusiasm, the *élan,* the joy at those gatherings. If I had been a bourgeois correspondent, it would have been easier. A bourgeois correspondent is entitled to an occasional burst of enthusiasm. The readers accept such an aberration as the real stuff: "Even he, etc., etc." But I am not a bourgeois correspondent, I write for THE NEW MASSES, and my ecstacies, I knew, were bound to be taken with all kinds of qualifications, even by my own comrades, even, I am ashamed to say, by my own editors.

That was why I never wrote, for example, about that delightful episode when one of the combine operators—the young peasant Pelagutin, I think it was—began to argue with Stalin over what constituted a proper quota of work for a combine harvester. I don't remember the exact figures now, but Pelagutin, it seems, harvested over 1,000 hectares, saved about 1,600 kilograms of oil and earned over 5,000 rubles, in addition to the various bonuses and prizes. That was a record achievement. In his speech, Pelagutin, after describing his method of work and explaining how he had reached such a high level of proficiency, mentioned rather disapprovingly the 365 hectares covered by the average combine in his region. "Still, that is not so little," Stalin ventured to remark. Pelagutin, a peasant youth just from the field, in the presence of the most important people of the land, turned around and without the least hesitation snapped very self-assertively: "It is *little,* Comrade Stalin. We can do much better than *that,*" and proceeded with his speech. Stalin, taken down a peg, looked delighted.

One of the workers, in his speech, referred to Stalin as "the best Stakhanovite." The idea of adorning Stalin's name by linking it with the name of a simple and until now unknown miner was met with hilarious approval. I wasn't then in the hall, but from the reports of my friends, Stalin appeared

highly flattered, surely as flattered as would have been Stakhanov had he been called "the best Stalinite."

A Stakhanovite, a recent graduate from the Red Army, boasted that he now had a piano in his house. Someone from the Presidium asked him whether he knew how to play. The Stakhanovite, drawing himself up as if ready to salute, shot back: "No. But I promise to learn within one year!"

I FIND it difficult to convey to my little tourist audience the free spirit of give and take, the informality, humor, the little touches of pathos, the atmosphere of friendliness and joy that prevailed at the meetings of the Stakhanovites in the Kremlin.

For months the best representatives of the collective farms and socialist industries had been mounting the national rostrum, addressing the leaders of the Party and the Government, telling them of their work and experience, their accomplishments and their needs. And the leaders, in turn, rose before the peasants and workers and reported to them on the successes, the failures, the plans and the needs of the country. Taken together, all these conferences and sessions constituted a form of democracy so genuine as is inconceivable in any other land.

A moment which to me seemed most revealing was when Petrova, a young peasant

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girl, a combine operator from the Saratov Region, appeared on the platform.

I see the whole thing vividly before me. Petrova is announced as the next speaker. Applause. She rises in the back of the hall and, all flustered, almost runs to the speaker's stand. When she arrives, she can scarcely utter a sound. Breathing heavily, swallowing her words, she blurts out a few sentences about the 544 hectares she's harvested, the 2,250 rubles she's earned, the motorcycle she's received from Comrade Chernov (People's Commissar of Agriculture) and the phonograph she received from the county Soviet. While the audience cheers, she suddenly stops, looks distractedly at the Presidium, and mutters: "I'm nervous. . . . I can't speak. . . ."

Stalin leans over to her and says: "Speak. Speak. Don't be nervous! You're among your own people."

Petrova gathers her last strength and shouts desperately: "Next year I promise to harvest 700 hectares. I challenge to Socialist competition all the girls in the Soviet Union."

Applause. Laughter. Cheering.

Molotov, all smiles, "It sounds fine. Keep it up!"

But Petrova is all spent. She wipes her forehead, licks her lips, clutches at the edge of the stand.

Stalin: "Speak up. Speak up. It sounds fine. A little more nerve!"

Voroshilov: "You can take cities with nerve."

Stalin: "We are all one family here."

The girl, instead of speaking, rushes up to the Presidium. Stalin and all the others rise to receive her. She clasps the hands of one leader after another, while the audience cheers. Voroshilov, winking at Stalin, embraces the girl's shoulders and squeezes her.

One really felt that one was present at an intimate family reunion.

IT SEEMS I have started something. The tourists in the compartment clamor for more stories, especially my little perfervid Russian - Polish - French - Portuguese - Algerian-Jewish friend. The "authoress" has her nose buried in her notebook, trying to keep up with me. She seizes on my casually uttered phrase "Soviet Humanism" as a possible title for her "forthcoming" book.

They all ask questions about Stalin and they are greatly amused when I tell them how flabbergasted I was when I first saw Stalin get up and applaud when the Stakhanovites were giving him an ovation. What the devil! Does he know what he is doing? It looks ridiculous, absurd. The man is actually applauding himself. It's a good thing the bourgeois correspondents aren't here. He would become the world's laughing-stock.

I first grasped the meaning of all this when Kosirev, head of the Young Communist League, on being applauded after his quotation from one of Stalin's speeches, turned toward the Presidium and, stretching his arms way out toward Stalin, began to clap. But Stalin, smiling mischievously and shaking his head in amused disapproval, was right on the spot. He rose, leaned over toward Kosirev, and also stretching his arms as far as he could toward the Young Communist, began to clap even more vigorously.

The audience got the point. There was hilarious laughter. Indeed, the whole apparently absurd performance suddenly became so natural and inevitable that it would have been difficult to imagine it otherwise.

The point is that Stalin does not think of himself as detached from the Party, the collective, the working class. By the will of that class, he is at present the exponent of the Communist Party. What he says and does are expressions of the will, the mind, the policy of the organization he represents. Hence, when he or his utterances are applauded, instead of accepting such marks of approval as personal tributes, he turns round and places them at the feet of the movement whose ideas and policies he articulates. By applauding with the others Stalin seems to say: But why honor only me, when you and you and you and all of us are really involved in this?—a fine symbolical gesture defining the place of the individual, however exalted his position in a socialist society.

"Hands Across the Tracks"

PAUL VILLARD

JUST plain Bill is dead and so there's a union in the candy factory back in my home town. If he stayed alive the chances are that there still wouldn't be a union. Anyway he died and there was a big funeral and the boys from the factory waited a few months out of respect to him and then they sent for an organization charter. All this goes back to the time when just plain Bill busted the revolution.

When I was a kid I lived in a small standard-equipped town over in Jersey. It had its churches, chain stores, schools, hotel and railroad station. I used to think it was the biggest and best town in the country but I found out soon enough what a short sneeze it was between New York and Atlantic City. The population in those days was about fifteen thousand. It was split in two by the fat shiny tracks of the Pennsy that cleaved through the center of town separating the rich from the poor. On our side there stood the big candy factory that employed about two hundred people. Everybody lived in small pretty shacks that stood row by row in an even pattern around a little church square. From the windows of the workers' shacks there were hung clotheslines that shot out in every direction. They were almost always weighted down with wash, and I suppose that was the main picture the people in the trains caught when they passed through and looked our way. It must have been a pretty picture; the big drawers blowing in the wind, the sheets glistening their whiteness in the sun, and all kinds of colored dresses in between.

The nearest thing to the tracks from our part of town was Moe's lunch wagon which stood boldly but not too erectly about fifty feet away. It was the most necessary place in our part of town. The boys had plenty of wind to let out and they let it out plenty between hamburgers, westerns and coffee. Politics, murders, rapes, county elections and local scandal was the talk. Dates with the girls were made through Moe, and the secrets he held in that little round head of his could have taken him around the world in hush money. In all that big broad talk about nothing that went on in Moe's, the boys never directed any of that wind and energy towards the problems of their own lives and their own jobs. They seemed well satisfied with themselves, their jobs and their security. Everybody in our part of town seemed happy. The wives washed and cooked and hummed in their rockers on the front porch. The kids ran around dirty-faced and full of fun. Nobody minded those glistening Pennsy tracks that shone in everybody's face telling the whole town who was who.

One of the big reasons for the nice contentment on our part was William Charon Carpenter, president of the First National Bank over on the other side of the tracks, who on Sundays after church took off his wing collar and black tail coat and came over to our side not as William Charon Carpenter but as just plain Bill with a toothpick in his mouth and an old felt hat on his head. He was just plain Bill to the mothers, to the kids and to the boys, telling us all between spits of plug that we were living in the best town in the state. He mingled with every last one of us. He fished with us, ate with us, and gabbed with us . . . on Sundays. He rarely missed getting in his piece about when he lived in that first house there next to the church that wasn't even built yet and how tough it was in his day when there wasn't a store for miles

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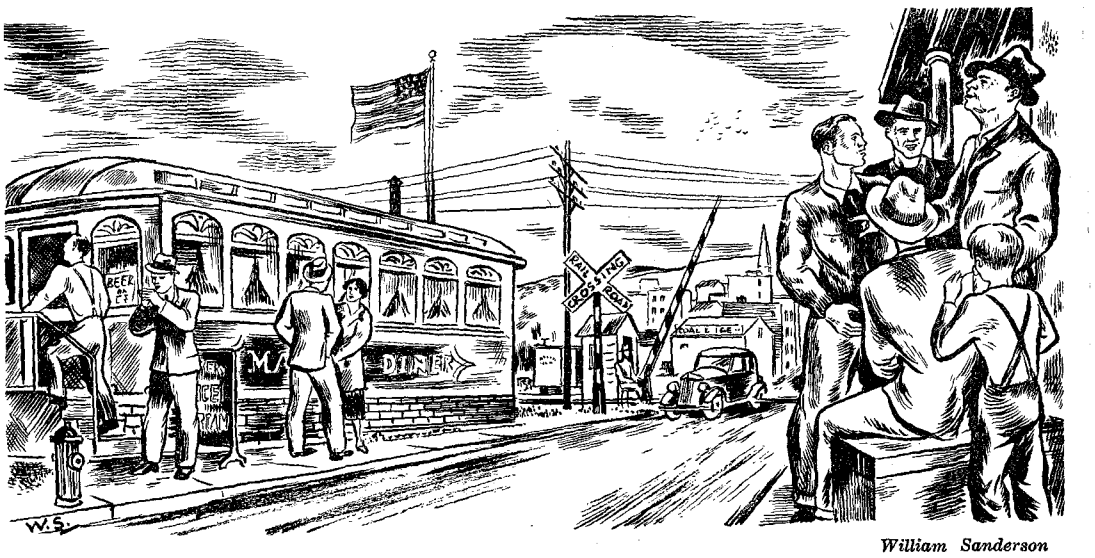
around. . . . It was hands across the tracks on Sundays, and that one day a week every week in the year for many years was enough to hold inside of us the spirit of American Democracy, the saga of rags to riches. If ever there popped up any rebellious motion it was smothered on Sundays when just plain Bill came over the tracks with a hello and a handshake for everyone, with the whole American Democracy in that one little toothpick in his mouth. He seemed happy with us. He was a homespun sort. If his vanity was tickled on these visits it didn't take away from his wholeheartedness or his sociability. I liked him. He was jovial, portly and plain. I remember seeing him in Moe's place one Sunday running a hamburger contest for the boys. He looked the simplest, heartiest fellow in the crowd. Moe cleaned up that day and Doctor Newton was kept busy for a week. That one hamburger contest did more to hold back a revolution than anything I know, because our whole side of town talked and laughed gratefully about it for years and in that way I'm sure we compromised ourselves spiritually with bank presidents and the whole bourgeois society.

One day a few years after the hamburger contest, there came to our town a young wiry-looking fellow who took a room on our side of the tracks and began mixing with the boys over at Moe's. He listened to all their chatter for a few nights and then he got Moe and a few of the boys to pass the word around that there would be a meeting on a certain night for all the workers of the candy factory. It got around soon enough that he was a union organizer sent over to start a union in the factory. There was a lot of buzzing and before this fellow had a chance to open his mouth our whole side of town was for throwing him out. Well, he held the meeting in the dance hall right outside of town and all the boys went over. He told the boys plenty. He started easy telling about the trade union; its strength as one collective operating force in developing and adjusting better conditions for the worker. When the boys answered him that they had no kick, that there was no unemployment in town, he warmed up and let them have it. Did they know there was such a thing as a minimum scale not fixed by the bosses but by the workers? Did they know that they were plain coolie labor? Sure there was no unemployment. Why should there be when men could be had for sixteen dollars a week dipping chocolate ten hours a day. Did they want that to go on forever? Didn't they want a forty-hour week like the boys in Passaic? Didn't they want a minimum of twenty-two dollars a week like the boys in Passaic? How did the boys in Passaic get it? They *organized*. They felt their power as a solid unit and they made demands for better wages, for less working hours. And the bosses listened. *They had to listen*. . . .



William Sanderson

After that Moe's lunch wagon rocked with rebellion. All hours of the day and night the boys talked minimum wage, closed shop and less working hours. They read mimeographed sheets that harangued the bosses and told the workers how they were exploited. . . . The girls were neglected and Moe had one hell of a time trying to clear the place for other customers. He had to have turnover even if there was going to be a revolution. The place turned from a quiet country lunch wagon into a seething den for Bolsheviki. And only fifty short feet away lay the shiny steel tracks of the Pennsy, mighty line of bourgeois resistance.

The little wiry union organizer was busy as a bee. He felt the impact and response. He was used to it. He went about his work coolly, answering questions, distributing leaflets, arranging the next meeting and generally sustaining the bedlam out of which he figured would surely come a union. But he didn't figure on just plain Bill in our town; just plain Bill the great American opiate. Here's what happened.

On Saturday, five days after the organizer arrived, a notice was posted that there was going to be a meeting on the following Monday night at which time application would be drawn for a charter affiliating the workers with the A.F. of L. Also at that meeting concrete demands would be set up regarding better wages and less working hours at the factory. Well, Saturday night in our part of town was like Moscow in October, 1917. The Bolsheviki were the young militant workers and the opposing factions were the housewives, the mothers and the old-timers. Excited groups were huddled here and there; in the square, in the pool parlor, in the barber shop. Moe's place was the "palace headquarters." It was a magnificent tribute to the little wiry organizer. He must have had a good deal of power in his talk, his personality. He must have known just where, when and how to strike the match.

Sunday came and everybody got up and went to church. The preacher tried to stop the revolution with something from the Old Testament. He didn't have to bother because just plain Bill was taking off his frock coat and putting on an old pair of pants getting fixed up to come over.

It was about two o'clock when just plain Bill strode across the tracks. He came over the same way he always did, with his hands in his pockets, a toothpick in his mouth and the old felt hat tilted back of his head. He walked past Moe's and on down the road towards the square, all the kids following him and calling to him affectionately. When he got to the square he propped himself up by the post in front of the barber shop and the hellos and handshakes were passed around as usual. He began to talk fish to the boys but they were in no mood for fish talk that day what with the revolution coming on. He must have known what went on all week because right afterwards he chucked the toothpick from his mouth and sunk his teeth into the gist of the whole works. Listen, boys, he said, I understand that you fellows are figuring on organizing down at the factory and I'm here like one of you to tell you that it's a pretty poor idea (spat). . . . I can't figure out how you can let a stranger come into town, sent here by a gang of them Reds from New York and make you think that you're stepped on. *We've* been pretty happy here. The kids got their schools, all you boys got your homes and there isn't a single fellow in town who can't get a job. Lord. Do you know what's going on in the cities? There's a depression, boys, a *depression*. Mr. Larson over at the factory is fighting it. There's tooth-and-nail competition he's got to contend with to keep the output going, to keep the factory going, to keep you boys working. *We've* got to stick with him, boys, through this depression and when conditions get better sure there'll be more money and less hours. Larson's got *our* interests, the *whole town's* interest in his heart, and *we've* got to feel the same way and not let some agitatin' Red come in to collect dues for some gang in New York and give *us* all kinds of promises and bust up the patriotic spirit of this town (spat). . . . Think it over, boys. *We've* all grown up together and this is *our* town. Let's hold hands and keep it *our* town. . . . And now

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while I'm on the subject of holding hands let me tell you boys what I've been wanting to say right along. . . . You all know my daughter Amy. . . . Well, she was engaged last night to Jess Evans who works with you boys over at the factory. . . . Didn't surprise me. He's a fine boy, Jess (spat). . . . I'll be throwing a big party next Saturday night and I want every one of you fellows over to the house. We're goin' to celebrate their engagement and at the same time we'll make it a patriotic party. We'll have Mr. Larson over and Judge Peterson and we'll get the High School band to play for the dancing (spat). . . .And now, boys . . . it's a swell day for fishing and if any of you got a spare tackle I'd be obliged. . . .

That's how just plain Bill busted the revolution in my home town. It was as simple as that; no shots fired, no bloodshed. Of course, it wasn't the speech alone that did it. It was the hundreds of Sundays behind it. It was the spits between it. I hate to think that he deliberately held us down, kept us exploited, even to the extent of sacrificing his daughter Amy at the strategic moment. I hate to think that he was delegated from his side of town to hold us peaceful for so many years. I hate to think these things because I liked him. But then I liked Moe, too, who himself may have been a part of Mr. Larson's tactics. For years he allowed the boys to bury themselves in small talk and petty intrigues. He seemed to have had much more stuff in his head than to have fostered such a nothingness of spirit and mind. It would have been easy to have pictured him a kind of a Lenin with that little round head of his and his deep, sunken eyes. That little lunch wagon could have been a vital social force, a hotbed of revolutionary activity. It could even have been an arsenal in some sanguineous hour. It had a key position, being only fifty short feet away from the Pennsy tracks. *Over the tracks* little Moe might have cried, with a gun waving in his hand. And over the tracks might have followed the two hundred workers from the candy factory and all the other workers with their mothers, their wives and their kids. . . . But I'm afraid they might have been stopped dead in those tracks; not by the boom of cannons or the staccato crackling of machine guns, but by just plain Bill who would be facing them with a toothpick in his mouth and that old felt hat tilted back on his head. . . .

Well, just plain Bill is dead and the boys have their union. The glistening tracks of the Pennsy still shine on, but now that just plain Bill isn't around everybody's beginning to blink a little. Moe still has the lunch wagon and Jess Evans, Amy's husband, is second vice-president of the First National Bank.

Elephant into Fox

MARGUERITE YOUNG

CLEVELAND.

IT WAS only Friday, June 5, but already the Hollenden Hotel was jammed from *porte cochère* to second floor. There, amidst the sunflowers and wall posters blazoning the simple, hard face of Alfred Mossman Landon, stood young John Hamilton, quipping brightly with the reporters. Front man of the Landon camp, Hamilton is the biggest news source of the convention. Forty-two and looking even younger with his alert, angular face, red-brown curls and slight stature, he is indeed a new physical type in bossdom. Perched on a chair, he handled the press with an improved Roosevelt technique: not only were they George or Jim or Harry to him, but he was John to them.

At the edge of the crowd, journalists just arriving were putting themselves down as tardy; the convention would be over before they got a story out from the scene.

"And so," I greeted a veteran of one of the American Liberty League's staunchest supporting newspapers, "your man, Landon, is going to town." He smiled pleasantly, saying, "Yeah, when a man has made a touchdown, what does it matter whether he kicks a goal? Of course, it's nice if he does, but even if he doesn't—"

Beside Hamilton stood Joe Martin of Massachusetts, Congressman and small-town newspaper publisher, the Landon floor-manager. That choice was another indication of the expectation of putting the Kansan over without a convention struggle—Martin is a gentle, slow-spoken little fellow who suspended press conferences rather than even try to fill Hamilton's role when the latter was too busy.

In the same Hollenden Hotel, close by the Landon bandwagon quarters, a suite of rooms was set aside for the use of twenty-five of the most active newspapermen in town—the William Randolph Hearst group, not only writers, but also executives.

Over in the Builders' Exchange, slightly removed from Superior Avenue's convention hotels, sat the Republican National Committee, headed by Henry P. Fletcher, a Hoover ambassador in the Big Businessman-statesman tradition, himself a large financier. Quietly, the committee busied itself with such routine procedure as seating lily-white delegations over the protests of Negro Republicans from Dixie. Not the least member of the committee was Ernest T. Weir, the elegant open-shopper of Weirton Steel and the Liberty League.

In these men and circumstances are epitomized the forces in control of the convention and the technique by which they hope to revive the G.O.P. as the No. 1 political instrument of reaction in America. Their central slogan is: Elephant into Fox. Their tactic is remote control. What is worth the notice of labor and liberal as well as radical forces is that they are not without resources for out-demagoging the Democrats. That is the news this week in Cleveland.

For example, take John Hamilton himself. The National Committee relieved him of his duties, freed him to manage the Landon campaign. He was the committee's lawyer, and it is as lawyer and soldier that you hear him mentioned. He is the "upstart" typifying the "new regime" in the conversation of the press and delegates who will tell you, in all earnestness, that the G.O.P. is "dethroning" the Old Guard. Who would guess, in all this and the undeniable surface differences between him and the ponderous old swashbuckler, Jim Watson of Indiana, that Hamilton himself is the creature of the same Old Guard? It was Dave Mulvane, Kansas' late national committeeman of odorous memory, who made him. Mulvane, whom he served as secretary for years, and the American Legion, whose departmental commander was Hamilton and whose intimate connections with Kansas utilities in Morgan's network is accepted.

Or take the off-stage actor, wealthy advertising-man Bruce Barton. Since he offered his services to the National Committee months ago, he has been looked upon as an old fuddy-duddy, making one blunder after another. One story told around the hotel corridors is that Chairman Fletcher called him and asked for suggestions. He took two weeks to think, then made two proposals. One, that they stage a national beauty contest and bring the forty-eight state winners to Cleveland as a special convention attraction; the other, that they bring the oldest Republican and present him to the delegates. Fletcher asked him whether he knew who the oldest Republican was. He did not. "Probably," Fletcher observed, "it is John D. Rockefeller." Yet the same Barton, or a very canny mentor using him, was a factor in the one strategic move decided upon here, the minimum-wage "amendment" trick. The day after William Allen White, the incurable liberal camp-follower of Landon, called for a plank meeting the Supreme Court veto issue, Barton stepped in. He telegraphed a well-known writer, asking him to relay to a Landon strategist his approval of a *state* minimum-

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wage law plank including a Constitutional amendment if necessary. Barton added he would be glad to give any assistance—but perhaps he'd better stay out of the picture in view of his du Pont connections.

The stage is set, all right, not to say overset. In exchange for the $150,000 cash put up for convention expenses, Cleveland business, especially the hotels, will reap a rich harvest. Besides the thousand-and-one delegates, the estimate of visitors expected by the time the convention opens June 9, is 20,000 to 30,000, and $10 a day is a conservative estimate of their average daily spending. They say the press alone has reserved 4,000 rooms, not counting the staterooms on the Seeandbee, tied up at the lake shore.

Every one of the ten thousand pipes of the organ in the $12,000,000 Public Auditorium is ready to roar "O, Susanna," and "Put on Your Old Grey Bonnet." Thanks to a W.P.A. project employing thousands of Cleveland's jobless, the hall is freshly renovated, its seats ticketed and some of them for sale at hundreds of dollars apiece. All is complete—to the gavel with which the convention will be opened. One presented, appropriately enough, by the Chamber of Commerce of Canton, Ohio. Tallied and computed, switched back and forth as numbers were bandied back and forth in the claims of the candidates' spokesmen all last week, some delegates actually arrived today. Said one, wistfully, picking his way through the crowd, "Now that we're here, I understand all we have to do is vote once and turn around and go home."

One place, alone, you saw delegates expressing real emotion, generating real excitement—in an indignation meeting attended chiefly by Negroes in a working-class neighborhood far from the cut-and-dried capering on Superior Avenue. The disfranchised descendants of the Americans whose emancipation from chattel slavery was the birthcry of the Republican Party filled a small hall. They listened to the Florida, Georgia and Louisiana delegates excluded from Republican activities. Their efforts to gain redress from the National Committee were in vain. One told of a state convention in a Jim-Crow hotel in Marianna, three miles from the scene of a Florida lynching.

"The only thing the Negroes have had from the Republican Party," said Dr. Leroy N. Bundy, Cleveland councilman and Ohio delegate-at-large, "is the privilege of coming to national conventions and expressing their hopes, their aspirations, their longings. Now somebody wants me to be a party to taking that away from them."

Bitterly he related the G.O.P.'s decision, following the Hoover sweep of southern states in 1928, to try to maintain them by building lily-white Republicanism below the Mason-Dixon line.

"All the time, the party knew that 75 per-ent of the population down there are dis-ranchised," continued Bundy, pausing for nass "Amens," "and therefore its first duty was to enfranchise the Negro, according to the Constitution; but instead it has displaced them, even from the party itself."

But advancing the lily-white cause in the South was part of the deliberate plan for the convention and thus far there is every indication that it, like the nomination and platform, will proceed according to schedule. That schedule calls for the nomination of Landon, with Senator Arthur Vandenberg of Michigan or Frederick Steiwer of Oregon, or Liberty Leaguer James Wadsworth of New York, by Friday night. Vandenberg's public turndown of second place and his maneuvering with Senator William E. Borah of Idaho placed him in a good position to rally anti-Landon forces, especially should Borah release his delegates to Vandenberg. But with John Hamilton counting a comfortable majority for Landon on the first ballot, it seems to be too late. Especially when the Landon camp has a mass organization ranging among arriving delegations in order to cement them to the bandwagon.

The truth is, the Lion of Idaho neglected the Achilles heel with a regularity that couldn't have served Landon better if it had been deliberate: during the months when it would have been enough to point to the Hearst press' origination of the Landon boom, Borah dawdled over the old stuff about "anonymous interests" backing the Governor. He mentioned oil mincingly, but omitted the point, that *the* oil magnate, J. Howard Pew, Pennsylvanian *and* Liberty Leaguer, angeled Landon. It was the knowledge that these labels were fatal, and the hope of offsetting them, that led the ruling clique to its "liberal platform" strategy.

Months ago, you will hear from Landon supporters here, many Easterners including Wall Streeters, journeyed West to see him. They found him eminently sound: he had balanced Kansas' budget by cutting off the last penny of state relief funds; he gave an ingratiating grunt to almost any suggestion, having no ideas of his own; he was the ideal "liberal" Westerner to be "accepted" by the tory East. Hence, the uninstructed delegations, elected by primaries controlled by state machines. Hence the Landon-camp-inspired newspaper stories about the rout of the Old Guard. They are all here, quiet it's true, but significantly not lifting a finger to stop Landon. Except George Moses of New Hampshire, whose bellowing, blistering wisecracks on behalf of Frank Knox added just that touch of tory "opposition" that it took to complete the Landon build-up.

The platform will contain most of Big Business' demands, especially budget-balancing by scrapping work relief and drastically reducing and in some states—as Landon's—wiping it out, especially denying every specific mass demand articulated since the Roosevelt slogans soured. This much, of course, was to be expected; the significant thing is the decision to bundle it up in demagogy, especially on the Constitutional amendment question. It is taken for granted, now, that this plank will boil down to sponsoring an amendment, "if necessary," to press back upon the states, long demonstrated to be impotent, the impossible task of social legislation, even the mildest reform measures. It will be recognized as a fraud at once by the informed, but it constitutes nevertheless a shrewd bit of demagogy.

More than Roosevelt's cream-puff reforms, the Hearst-Liberty-League crowd abhorred his demagogy and particularly his deed-contradicted words that stirred mass consciousness to fundamental issues. But now they are developing their own brand, even more cynical and threatening. Even they are not yet convinced they can win with it. But it is their one desperate chance, and they are already figuring out methods of concealing the fortunes they will spend—$10,000,000 to start with, it is said—trying.

Their Books

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

For them were written
the books; the heroes
and Edens were theirs;
the love like long play,
and war like adventure.

In their books free
and wide was the land
for their faring;
(in steps spaced by chains
we followed and served them);
it was filled with all fruits
for their mouths;
(for us the coarse
and the meagre,
and for sauce our
hungering saliva)

under the earth
as in treasure vaults lay
coal for them, oil for them,
ores for them (we
were the diggers).

In their books
we were summed with
the acres and crops,
the cattle, the fish,
the ores and the lumber,
their richest resource, "an
industrious population."

There comes
a revision of life;
the books are rewritten.

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Our Readers' Forum

What Prisoners Read

I want you to know that I especially appreciate receiving THE NEW MASSES. A virile magazine of this kind is a rarity amongst the reading matter allowed here, and although I am permitted to receive THE NEW MASSES I may not, under threat of punishment, pass it along to any of my fellow-sufferers. The prison "library" is a pitiful, emasculated affair; and is combed to meet the status of the mentally lowest prison inmate. The inanities of censorship in an institution of this sort typify the callous disregard by the State of even ordinary measures for clinical treatment of the so-called criminal mind. The libidinous case wallows in the pornography of Hearst and Macfadden. The mobster basks in the reflected "glory" of his old gang having made lurid headlines in the gutter sheets, while pretending he is angry at "the lousy write-up." Yet let a book arrive for an inmate which, however faintly, may tend to arouse social consciousness, and we are treated to some plain and fancy censoring. Some months ago, the book *Red Medicine* was sent to me which I was permitted to read only after a delegation from the International Labor Defense had visited the warden. After reading *Red Medicine* (the reddest thing about the book is the title), I had to promptly return it to the front office where, safely protected by the panoply of a modern prison, *Red Medicine* can no longer work its malign influence upon the future nobles of the Pearl Bergoff agency.

After four and one-half years of imprisonment I am shortly to be released.

THOMAS J. I. BUNKER, 1674.

Attica, N. Y.

The Ghost of Ben Franklin

So! The perspicacious University of Pennsylvania has decided to accept a "Time" but not a "New Masses" gift subscription! Strange how Time marches on. It was only yesterday that I read in the very same library a maxim of its founder, Comrade Ben Franklin: "The day will come when a Philosopher will be able to put his foot on any soil and say 'This is my native land.'"

U. of P., Phila., Pa. JULIAN.

Art Young's Own Title

When I saw the cartoon of mine used in THE NEW MASSES Title Contest, I was curious to know how near the prize winner would come to my own title. In the foreground of my picture is a policeman who resembles a real bull. In my title, the "Bull" is saying, as he watches the strikers, "They're nuttin' but a lot of dumb animals!"

I like to see others interpret the meaning of cartoons. In this case, however, with all due respect to editorial judgment and to the prize winner, Mr. C. H. Norling, of Sioux City, Iowa, I still feel like retaining my own title. You will probably see it again when my book of cartoons, "The Best of Art Young," is published this Fall.

Bethel, Conn. ART YOUNG.

"How Do We Go About It?"

In your recent article "Mass Writers Wanted" was a hopeful thought for would-be Herbsts and LeSueurs and Anna Louise Strongs. How about books for children? Surely there is a great lack of attractive books, especially picture books that will interest youngsters in American history and heroes other than Henry Ford. There are a number of us who have been trained in child psychology, have had experience in camp counselor jobs or nursery-school jobs and could make ourselves very useful to the literary side of the social Left. There are enough stories in our own national culture to interest a child in the class struggle. We need not depend upon translations from the Russian or stories of German Pioneer children that I have seen, for our material.

Here we are with something to offer. How do we go about things? I second the suggestion made in a recent issue of your magazine that you who know how writing and publishing, etc., is done, tell us. ELSA GOTTLIEB.

Smith College, Northampton, Mass.

A Magazine for Children

Your correspondent of last week, A. Marshan, who wrote in to inquire about reading material for her niece, "aged 13, eager, intelligent," evidently is not aware of, or familiar with The New Pioneer magazine. Without batting an eyelash, we can state as a fact that this magazine is the only magazine in the field today that can definitely fill your correspondent's needs.

The New Pioneer, a magazine for children, is dedicated to the vitally important task of giving to its readers that material which will best awaken in them and develop the healthiest and most progressive social viewpoint. This project is accomplished by printing every month in the pages of The New Pioneer, the literary and artistic work of the finest writers and artists in the country. Also, encouragement is given to our young readers to contribute material of their own. Every issue is replete with poems, drawings and short items submitted by boys and girls whose creative instincts have been awakened and developed through contact with our magazine.

NEW PIONEER.

New York City.

Educational Vacation for Men

Any young man with an income of at least $25 per week is invited to spend a highly educational vacation on the western plains this summer. Such people either with or without their own car are needed to buy the gasoline and go with farm organizers to farm meetings, picnics, and political rallies. References from people known in the farm or labor movement are required. Write to Lem Harris, care of The Farmers National Weekly, P. O. Box 540, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

From a Macfadden Employe

I want to voice my appreciation for the fine article on Bernarr Macfadden in your May 19 issue.

I am an employe of Macfadden Publications and one of the many who suffer while this man editorializes on the liberal treatment he gives his employes. His lower salaried employes receive one week's vacation with pay, provided they are in the employ of the company one year from May 1st of the preceding year to May 1st of the following year. They receive no more than one week regardless of the fact that they may have been in the employ of the company five or ten years.

The higher salaried employes who can usually afford membership in country clubs where they can go week-ends, are given two weeks' vacation with pay, if they have been with the company for one year.

Lower salaried employes are sometimes given two days' sick benefit from the company—this beneficent gesture being accorded at the discretion of the company. It's impossible to find out how decisions affecting these cases are arrived at. Higher salaried employes are paid when ill.

We have a five-day week—given to us at the time of the second pay cut (neither of these cuts having been restored to the employes—his capital and labor-sharing plan notwithstanding) when employes received a reduction of salary and an equal reduction of working hours.

Yes, we have time over week-ends and would like to go out into the country and do some knee-bending exercises, as Mr. Macfadden suggests so rhapsodically, but the hitch in the matter is that we can't afford to get away.

The Macfadden Employes' Association, made up of contributors of weekly dues amongst the small-salaried employes, offering benefits during illness, is now practically defunct. The officers of this association are now trying desperately to save the association by retaining its members asd suggesting a cut in sick benefits. The higher salaried employes do not belong to this association (and they could subscribe to a sizeable amount of dues) because they are paid by the company when they are home ill.

It is therefore so gratifying and important to be able to know that a publication like THE NEW MASSES prints an article about this man, exposing his hypocrisy and viciousness.

More and more employes of Macfadden Publications and similar "saviors" of business must turn with interest and admiration toward an honest and fearless publication like THE NEW MASSES.

L. L. X.

"I Don't Read Hearst"

Stickers with the inscription, "I Don't Read Hearst," are still for sale from "The League Against Yellow Journalism," P. O. Box 412, Berkeley, California. The U. S. Post Office Department has refused to permit the placing of these stamps on the back of letters—thanks to the interference by William Randolph Hearst himself—but they can be placed effectively *inside* letters, on bills to the utility corporations everywhere, on all kinds of bills and stationery.

They sell for 5 cents a sheet with 50 stamps, $2.50 for 100 sheets, and $15.00 for 1,000 sheets. Almost one million stamps have been sold already.

LEAGUE AGAINST YELLOW JOURNALISM.

Case of Local 24, M.I.W.U.

THE NEW MASSES has always supported the fight for democracy and progressive action in the trade-union movement. Therefore, we, a group of workers discriminated against in the Millinery International Workers Union, Local 24, would like to state our case in your columns.

After much inter-union friction, our membership reunited in 1932. But a group of women workers, over 100 in number, were discriminated against because of their militancy in the Needleworkers Industrial Union in 1929. Their activities in the union movement seven years ago are still used against them though they are actively employed in the industry. Their union books are marked "Temporary," the right to attend local meetings or become functionaries in shops or even vote is denied. The executive of the union promised that this temporary status would last only two years, but after four years, it has made no move to remedy the situation.

At present, the labor movement is distinguished by the drive toward unity and democracy. The group discriminated against in Local 24 represents an element that has given energy and strength to the building of the union. We therefore appeal to all liberals and members of the trade-union movement to help us to gain reinstatement by bringing pressure of the executives of Local 24 who want to split the union and keep militant elements out of the membership meetings.

Brooklyn.

THE COMMITTEE OF "TEMPORARY" BOOKS,
MILLINERY INTERNATIONAL WORKERS UNION.

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

John Reed

IN HIS remarkable analysis of the effect which time has upon experience, Proust describes over and over again the alterations in the image we remember of a man or an event. A person we have encountered, an event whose impact we have felt may leave the most profound impression upon us; yet a decade later we may discover details which convince us that the person or the event was not precisely what we had remembered. Time may correct the original impression; or time may amplify it, hence by the law whereby quantity passes into quality, alter it. This is all the more striking in the case of one whom we have known only by reputation, as John Reed was known to those of us who came into the revolutionary movement shortly after his death, tragic and heroic, in a far-off country, which, with time, came closer and closer to our hearts.

At the opening of the twenties, new members like myself on the staff of The Liberator (formerly The Masses, later THE NEW MASSES), learned to know Reed only through his own strong writing, through Max Eastman's magnificent tribute at a memorial meeting, through Louise Bryant's poignant letter from Moscow describing Jack's funeral, through anecdotes we heard from Floyd Dell. I remember Dell trying to explain his dead friend's character to me: "If Shelley had lived to 1905, he would have been Jack London; and if Jack London had lived to 1917, he would have been John Reed." This was one way of saying that the lyrical temperaments of all three, animated by passionate love of life, truth and justice, sought fulfillment in revolutionary action.

In Greenwich Village, Reed was looked upon as a potentially great artist who had unfortunately gotten mixed up in politics more than was good for any artist; in Communist circles, his bohemian and literary zest was forgiven for the sake of his important services to the cause. It was not until I reached Soviet Russia in 1926 that I realized to what heroic proportions the Reed legend had grown. I remember standing at his grave under the Kremlin wall, as six years earlier in Paris I had stood before Heine's grave in the Père Lachaise; and I could not help reflecting that there was a continuity in socialist revolutionary tradition, and that for my generation the American had replaced the German poet. From Bolheviks dramatized in *Ten Days That Shook the World* I heard, too, many legends of the passion and integrity with which Reed had thrown himself into the revolutionary struggle. He came here raw, undisciplined, they said; he died a real revolutionary.

By 1930, the figure of John Reed became a fruitful and activizing symbol for American radical literature. Clubs were named after him all over the United States in which artists and writers gathered to clarify the principles and purposes of revolutionary art and literature, to propagate them, to practise them. We chose him as our patron not so much because he was a dead hero as because his work and example were the living expression of a new and vital force in American life. He combined poetry and politics, memorable and transforming words with revolutionary action; he shaped our experience as he had transmitted his own. This integration of creative literary and practical revolutionary energy represented the ideal of those radical writers who in the "sectarian" days were engaged in advancing what used to be called proletarian literature.

Yet all this time, there was no complete story of John Reed's life. His figure was as fragmentary as it was effective. There were still his books and the dusty files, more and more difficult to obtain, of The Masses and The Liberator; there were still the amazing anecdotes, with truth assuming the glamorous hues of poetry; but no full portrait of the hero himself. For this, distance in time was needed; and a biographer unburdened by too close proximity to the man and his epoch; and a large audience interested in the past of a movement which has swept beyond its original narrow confines across America.

These conditions have now been fulfilled; the lack has been supplied in a biography written by Granville Hicks with the assistance of John Stuart.[1]

It is a narrative that is complete, penetrating and sympathetic, and it has aroused the just admiration of those who knew John Reed in person, those who grew up under the immediate influence of his work and those who have known him only as a dramatic name. This biography is not merely a record of the past. Granville Hicks has grasped and conveyed the general principles of John Reed's life and of the movement with which his name is identified, so that contemporary problems are illuminated and clarified. Everything is emphasized which is distinctive of John Reed both as a man and as a representative of that group of pre-war American intellectuals who began their important work in the world as romantic revolutionaries. And that is important, for Reed and his colleagues came to the proletariat not out of necessity but out of choice, and they came not to take but to give. And because they were sincere, they received much more than they gave, for the revolutionary movement integrated and enriched them spiritually far beyond their original endowments.

The essential part of the biography, by far the largest section of it, deals with John Reed's adventures in Mexico where he marched with Villa's men reporting the revolution against Huerta; with his life and work as a correspondent in the world war; with his participation in the Bolshevik revolution and his reports of it; with his activities in the Socialist Party and in the founding of the Communist Labor Party; and with his final days in Soviet Russia where he died at his post. Here Granville Hicks has done a splendid job of collating and organizing all the available material, so that the development of his hero is beautifully interwoven with the development of the epoch.

But Hicks has also done something else, something more difficult. In the early chapters dealing with Reed's youth, he gives us the key to that romanticism which was transformed into revolutionary action under the impact of industrial struggle, war and revolution. Reed was born into a position of privilege; his parents were able to give him whatever a rich man's son in the Portland, Oregon, of that day was likely to have, including the precious gift of self-regard, based on the sense of being well-born, respected, superior to the mass of people. But they also gave him the even more wonderful gift of independence and the feeling that nothing could justify the sacrifice of that independence. By the time John Reed entered Harvard, he already had well-developed within him his outstanding traits of romance and rebellion, as well as that "tremendous explosive energy" for which he became famous. But that energy split itself in many directions. Hicks observes that Reed could have had a literary career; he wanted that but he wanted something more, too. He wanted popularity, acclaim, social success. There was in him that all-embracing active principle characteristic of the Renaissance man, Castiglione's courtier who went to war, played politics, loved women and wrote sonnets. Indeed, his contemporaries actually spoke of an American "renaissance", so ripe were the grandsons of the pioneers to pour their energies into art and "social problems."

But in Reed the divergent streams of creative action had as yet only one unifying principle, a love of living which was summed up in his characteristic phrase: "Let's find some excitement." That passion

[1] *John Reed: The Making of a Revolutionary*, by Granville Hicks with the assistance of John Stuart. The Macmillan Company. $3.50.

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for all that is fruitful and creative in life, followed without corruption, may lead to more than pranks and the Harvard clubs. In Reed's case they led, for one thing, to those wonderful friendships which, for that matter, marked all the romantic radicals of that period and persisted for some time after the war even to my own generation which they influenced. There is fine insight in Hicks' analysis of the effects of those friendships. Reed had the sensibility of the poet but loved power and the exercise of it quite as much as he loved poetry; and he had the fortunate friendship of men like Professor Copeland, Lincoln Steffens and Charles Erskine Scott Wood to help him bridge the needless gap between poetry and the objective world, between sensibility and power.

AMERICA'S entrance into the war was John Reed's first great discipline. By the time he went to Russia to report the *Ten Days That Shook the World,* he was already on the way to being a revolutionist. The Bolshevik upheaval, whose vast creative energy he understood even amidst chaos, completed the transformation. "The majority of persons who learn the truth about Russia," he later wrote, "become convinced Bolsheviki." This was the case with him, whose search for truth led to Communism. From that time on, there is little hesitation, little division; poetry becomes politics; journalism is creative art in the service of the revolution, as those of us can testify who, as twenty-year-olds, had their lives remoulded by John Reed's dispatches from Moscow to The Masses.

Here the development reaches its climax in true discipline, for all the surging faculties of life and creation, love and power fuse in high action for the greatest of modern causes, the transformation of society in the interests of the mass of mankind. Reed is active and buoyant and fruitful as always, but all his marvellous talents and energies are centered on one goal. He travels, reports, speaks, is agitator and courier, defendant and fighter, but all toward the one aim. It is significant that now he contributes to the Revolutionary Age and turns from transmitting information about Bolshevism in Russia to organizing Bolshevism in America. He has at last discovered that in the proletarian revolution there is no gulf between word and act, between poetry and politics—and his own word integrated these modes of living and of transforming life.

The Wilsonian Era as a crucial turning point in American history has still to be adequately analyzed; and John Reed, the most romantic of the romantic rebels in his generation, requires a poet to convey the full flavor of his personality, the full social implications of his private conflicts and adjustments. To this difficult task Granville Hicks has brought an intense and sober industry, a persistence in collecting, collating, analyzing and synthesizing documents, a fine understanding of those aspects of Reed's character which had their roots in the puritan tradition.

Other aspects are stated with a detached justice which does not quite transmit the gusto of Reed's romantic side. I suspect that Hicks, who has all the virtues of the scholar, is merely tolerant of those who, like John Reed, cannot grasp or transmit experience unless they have savored it directly. The essence of Reed's story is the transformation, under the impact of the Bolshevik revolution, of a poet who did as he pleased into a revolutionary who did that which had to be done. Hicks understands inordinately well the virtue of subordinating the pleasure principle to the reality principle; his insight in this respect exceeds his sympathy with Reed's sheer love of living for its own sake, so to speak. We are told that Reed had gusto; we never *feel* it; there are hints that his conduct, even when most right, was not solely rational, but we do feel that sensibility and emotion have their own values in a case like this.

This puritanical approach sometimes results in curious judgments. There is considerable stress on Reed's self-interest, his pursuit of success, his ability in the conventional world, his desire to be a hero; and not enough stress on something more important, something essential not only to an understanding of Reed but of his radical milieu—namely, the subordination of success to the revolutionary movement, the extraordinary generosity of The Masses group toward each other and the world. The thing which most struck me about them when I first joined them in the fall of 1921 is that few ever blew their own horns, but everybody respected and gave due credit to his colleagues; and, what is more significant, almost everybody considered the revolutionary movement more important than his personal career or reputation.

A CERTAIN lack of sanguine imagination leads Hicks to miss the point of Reed's death under the circumstances of intense revolutionary struggle. If we fail to understand his death, we can scarcely understand his life or the effect it has had upon our own generation. I leave it to psychoanalysts to probe the significance of dying at the precise age of thirty-three; but surely a literary man cannot afford to miss the significance of early death upon romantic legend. The whole romantic literary tradition from Pico de la Mirandola to Hart Crane has early death as a crucial component, especially death under tragic circumstances.

Moreover, the revolutionary tradition is by no means as icy as Hicks implies. He tells us that the speeches delivered by Bukharin, Radek, Reinstein, Murphy and Rosmer at John Reed's funeral seemed "hard and impersonal" to the Americans in Moscow. Nothing could be further from the truth. Louise Bryant was so moved by these speeches, by the warm and loving tribute which the Russian Bolsheviks, soldiers and workers paid to her dead husband, that she wrote to the Liberator a letter describing the funeral in terms verging on poetry.

For Bukharin, Radek and the others the death of John Reed was not "only an incident in the struggle for world revolution." The love which these men felt for their American colleague was so profound that he became a living legend in Soviet Russia even before the full significance of his life and death dawned upon his American comrades. There have been several Soviet operas about John Reed, and before we in America began writing about his life and work, Soviet critics paid tribute to him.

And why stop with the "hard and impersonal" funeral? Did not Reed's effect upon the world increase then? How is it possible to deal with an important American life without showing its significance in America? The curtain does not fall with the closing of the Kremlin grave. If any man ever found his life by losing it that man was John Reed. For it was after his death that his example became most potent in American left-wing letters. During the entire decade of the twenties and the first two tumultuous years of the thirties, the handful of young Americans who carried on the revolutionary tradition in arts, letters and journalism were inspired by John Reed and his colleagues on The Masses. One can only omit so important a fact if one believes, as Granville Hicks does, that between John Reed's death and the arrival of recent recruits to left-wing literature there was a hiatus. This is untrue, and one wishes here for some of the sensibility and generosity which marked John Reed.

In spite of these shortcomings of insight and evaluation, Granville Hicks has made an important contribution to American letters in his biography of John Reed, one which no intelligent reader can afford to miss. For here we have the first documented outline of a life whose general pattern of the evolution of ideas has become the pattern of an increasing number of American men and women. Hicks has succeeded admirably in grasping and conveying after his own fashion the transformation of a man in our revolutionary epoch; he has not only narrated the life of John Reed but has described, as he truly says, "the making of a revolutionary." And in rendering logical and consistent the movement from Harvard to the Communist Party, from Portland to the grave under the Kremlin wall, Hicks has illuminated one facet of our literary and political heritage. His work will be indispensable to the reader who wishes to understand radical thought in America, and to those writers who will some day want to amplify and re-create the story of John Reed. For that story will be told more than once, as is natural with a life which symbolizes a turning point in American culture.

JOSEPH FREEMAN.

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Our Oppressed Nation

THE NEGRO QUESTION IN THE UNITED STATES, by James S. Allen. International Publishers. New York. Popular edition. $1.25.

HERE, at last, is a book on the Negro question which gets down to essentials. Many people will disagree with the conclusions. But they cannot evade the key problems which James S. Allen in his book has clearly defined as the basis for any serious and scientific discussion of the Negro question in this country.

Around no other major problem facing the American people have there hung, so long, such thick clouds of prejudice and confused ideas—hoary errors which have been accepted as gospel truth. Allen has done the wise thing. Instead of beginning with a discussion of common and "scientific" prejudices, which have so often served as the point of departure for writers on the Negro, he starts at the root of the problem; he gives a clear presentation of the real economic and social basis for both the oppression of the Negro and the superstructure of false ideas which has grown up around him. That is, perhaps, the greatest contribution the book has to offer.

Radical writers, sympathetic to the Negro, are often satisfied with an all too simple formula. Most of the Negroes are workers, they say, and their problem is therefore essentially a labor problem. Capitalism has nurtured prejudice between black and white labor. This prejudice must be overcome, the white and Negro workers must get together and together solve the problems of labor. For decades this has been the philosophy that permeated the advanced labor movement and for decades the official labor movement has been practically white. We hold no brief against a constant and persistent struggle against white chauvinism in the labor movement and elsewhere, but this in itself will not accomplish the desired end. Something more is needed: a clear and common understanding that the problems of the Negro extend beyond the limits of the "labor problem," that his most immediate needs are those of a people oppressed by another and more powerful nation.

This is the thesis of Allen's book. And he proves it conclusively by analyzing the economic and social structure of American society, particularly in the South. He supplies a much-needed analysis of the plantation system and the forms of tenancy which are peculiar to the South and which are reminiscent of a feudal slave society. He does not ask the reader to take his word for it. He shows, on the basis of first-hand statistical and economic data, that the plantation holds the dominant position in the agrarian economy of the deep South; that share-cropping and share-tenancy, the forms of labor which most closely approximate feudal forms, are most developed and most highly concentrated on the landed estates; and that these powerful remainders of the chattel slave system have also affected the white non-plantation area. Share-cropping and share-tenancy on the plantation are defined not as merely tenancy, which has been the usually accepted definition, but as a transitional form of labor between chattel slavery and other wage labor or capitalist farm tenancy.

A distinction is made between white and Negro tenancy in the South which is of decisive importance. The first difference is historical: Negro share-cropping and tenancy developed out of chattel slavery when the revolution inaugurated by the Civil War failed to give land to the freedmen, while white cropping and tenancy resulted from the expropriation of the small landowners by finance capital. This leads to another difference: most of the Negro croppers and tenants are to be found on the plantations, while most of the whites are in the non-plantation belts or on small tenant farms in the Black Belt counties. This distinction is important because, besides indicating a real difference in the problems of the white and Negro tenants, it shows that the agrarian survivals of the chattel slave plantation system affect the Negro tillers of the soil most drastically and most directly.

Allen's analysis of the agrarian system in the South is a marked contribution, in the first place, to a clearer conception of the nature and contradictions of American society. Our country is shown to be not that "pure" capitalist country unmarred by the remnants of a dark past which has so often been held up as a true picture. Instead, it bears the ugly and very perceptible imprint of the chattel slavery which almost every day bursts forth into a lynching or some equal brutality against the Negro. Not the remembrance but the real, practical remainders of the old slave system, in the form of the plantation and share-cropping, largely account for the oppression and persecution of the Negro. The plantation South serves as the basis for the anti-Negro South, which sends forth a stench poisoning the whole country.

The plantation belt, the book proves with maps and statistics, is at the same time the area of Negro majority. This was true over a long historical period. The expansion of the plantation and the spread of Negro slavery were a part of the same process. Today, more than seventy years after Emancipation, the plantation area is still the Black Belt. The slave plantation belt of 1860 is the Black Belt of 1936. What fact could more tellingly summarize the fundamental situation with regard to the Negro!

In succeeding chapters, the author traces the effects of southern semi-slavery upon the country as a whole and upon the development of the Negro people. Through the southern credit system, finance capital became the real overlord of the plantation. A study of the effects of the crisis and the Roosevelt agrarian policy reveals that this had the effect of bolstering the plantation system at the expense of the small farmers. The chapter on industrialization of the South proves that the plantation determined the location, nature and labor supply of industry at the expense of the Negro. The section on Northern industry defines the progressive features of the mass exodus of Negroes from the South which hastened the growth of a Negro proletariat, but which did not at the same time cause any permanent decline of the plantation. Industrialization as a whole, the author concludes, was not accompanied by any fundamental agrarian transformation in the South as was the case in older capitalist countries. It contributed to such a transformation only to the extent that it did create a Negro working class and a centralized white proletariat especially in the Birmingham area. The retardation of the Negro people by Wall Street imperialism also prevented the growth of any important industrial bourgeoisie among the Negroes and restricted Negro business to an impoverished and segregated market.

The burden of the whole analysis is to prove, more completely and conclusively than has yet been done, that the Negroes are an oppressed nation, which has been hindered by forces outside its control from free and unhampered evolution as a people. This once established, the major premise has been won.

In his two concluding chapters, Allen explains the Communist program with regard to oppressed nations generally and the Negro in particular. He shows that all the circumstances are present for the ultimate solution of the Negro question along the lines of self-determination. Here again the author approaches the question in a most convincing manner. He shows that the right of self-determination sums up the concept of equal rights for Negroes when applied realistically to the South, and is the culmination of a whole revolutionary process involving the destruction of the plantation economy and the establishment of popular democracy in its fully worked out form. In a very clear sum-

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mation chapter, the author takes up systematically the various objections which have been raised in different circles against the Communist program.

The purpose of the book, as Allen says in his introduction, is to provide a framework of analysis and ultimate solution which will hold together and give shape to practical tasks as they develop from day to day. For my part, I should have liked a more extended treatment of immediate tasks and problems and more discussion of some of the pertinent issues that arise in the creation of a Negro people's front, such as the National Negro Congress, and in building a Farmer-Labor Party. But Allen has shown the basis for this immediate program and has made a valuable contribution to the literature on the Negro. After all, there is a limit to what one can justly demand in a book which has performed its principal task so well.

JAMES W. FORD.

Facts That Work

LABOR FACT BOOK III, prepared by Labor Research Association. New York. International Publishers. $1.

THERE are too many unemployed facts in the world. Millions of healthy, able-bodied facts jostling the crowded pages of thousands of official, semi-official and "confidential" documents—all of them eating their heads off in paper and ink, or at best running stupid errands for the boys whose jobs depend on their never permitting a fact to take the initiative—or to join up with other facts in the very revolutionary business of really getting things done.

And just here is where the Labor Research Association comes in. Since 1927, when this organization started on the proverbial shoestring of capital and equipment, it has consistently followed its declared purpose "to conduct research into economic, social, and political problems *in the interest of the American labor movement* and to publish its findings in articles, pamphlets and books." The words which I have italicized are the core of the matter; not only do they explain the remarkable vitality of the work being done by "LRA" throughout the whole field of the class struggle, but they also indicate the principal reason for this vitality. That reason may be tersely summarized in the words, "Facts are also a weapon." Behind the scrupulously painstaking, patient and accurate research conducted by Robert Dunn, Grace Hutchins, Anna Rochester, Hy Kravif and their scores of willing associates, is the driving force of an ever-present conviction. The conviction that knowledge is not, *merely as knowledge,* power, but that it becomes power when—and only when—it is consistently linked with a far-reaching, politically mature collective will dedicated to the task of making the world a decent place for human beings to live in.

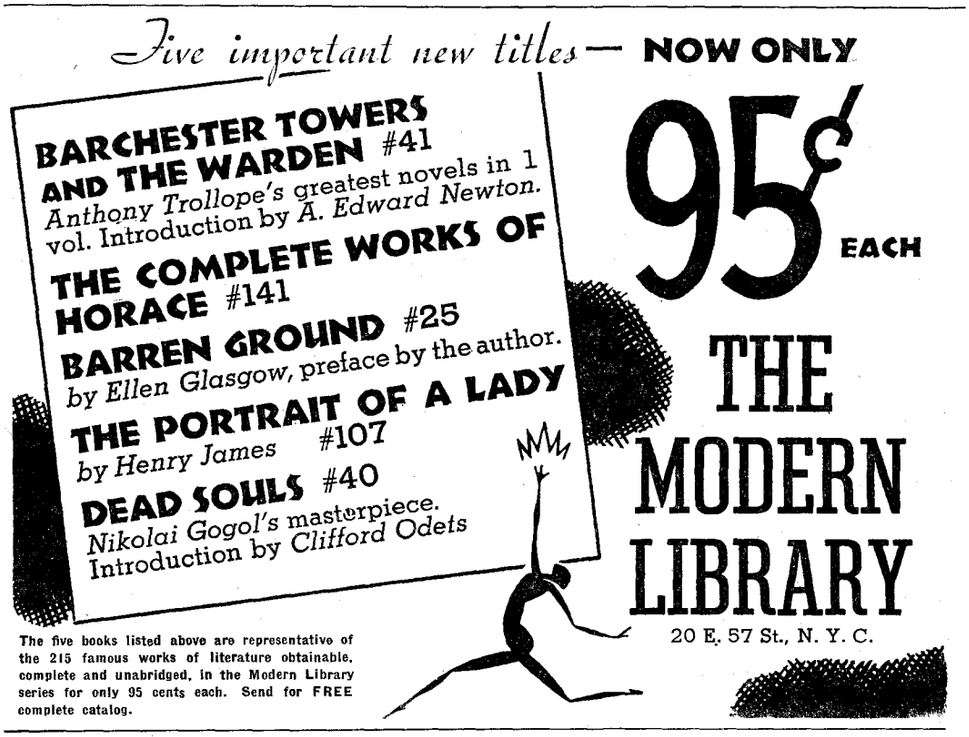
These prefatory remarks are necessary in order to enable the reader to understand that when he takes up *Labor Fact Book III* he is getting much more than a lot of "interesting" information. Like its predecessors, *Labor Fact Books I* and *II* (both of which are still indispensable), the present volume offers a wealth of carefully digested and organized material dealing with virtually every significant trend of the current American scene. With the very first chapter we jump with fine directness into a realistic analysis of our so-called "recovery." As throughout the whole book the emphasis is placed frankly on the glaring contrasts between promise and achievement; all the promises are shown to be working in favor of those to whom Anna Rochester has devoted a classic analysis—*Rulers of America: A Study of Finance Capital* and all the achievements—from wage agreements and strike arbitration to "social security" acts and Supreme Court decisions—tend steadily in the direction of a more intensified, more and more openly fascist reaction against the mass of American workers and citizens.

Here, supported by relevant facts and figures drawn from hundreds of responsible sources (including, of course, the Federal government's often very candid reports) you will find an astonishing variety of reference material organized around eleven main topics in such a way as to make it possible not only to understand what is happening and why, but also *to work out and apply concrete forms of struggle* against the Hydra-headed forces of reaction which are so swiftly developing in this country.

Suppose, for example, that you are a worker or professional man in any of the fifteen States where the terrorist "Black Legion" is so far known to be operating. You want to know what is behind such organizations; how they can start up and why they get away with it. In a chapter on "Civil Rights and Fascist Trends" you will find the answer in an analysis of anti-labor actions, fascist attacks on the schools, together with an account of the activities of the American Liberty League, Chamber of Commerce of the U. S., American Legion, Father Coughlin, Hearst—and some 26 other reactionary agencies (to which the Black Legion will be added in later editions).

What is the situation with regard to unemployment and relief? What has been the actual effect of the New Deal on workers' wages, working conditions and living standards? How many and what kind of strike actions have there been in the past two years? What has been happening in the trade unions and among the professional groups? Where does the farmer's shoe pinch, and why is the "triple-A" just a system of organized gypping? What is the war set-up in the country, and why are thousands of young men being press-ganged into a military machine whose principal activities to date have been the ruthless attacks upon workers striking for elementary human rights in a country whose wealth *they* have created?

All living questions, questions out of the thousands now clamoring for an answer that really gets somewhere—questions which it has been the business of Labor Research Association to answer in terms of action and results. In this compact book (which, as published, is only a fraction of the material in its comprehensive files) you will get the facts bearing on these questions: enough facts to enable you to take the offensive against people who annoy you with stupid "arguments" and chauvinistic appeals to "patriotism." Not for-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getting, of course, the fundamental issues of the United Front against war and fascism, of the Farmer-Labor Party in defense of genuine democratic liberties, of the major role on the international stage of the peace policy of the Soviet Union (to which an illuminating final chapter is devoted).

Historian Charles A. Beard is right when he says of *Labor Fact Book III*, "It is indispensable for those who are trying to view the American economic scene from all angles of vision." Get it, use it; learn to depend on it for accurate, vital and straight-shooting information on the great social problems of America today. And, if you don't find what you want in its pages, consult the earlier volumes, get acquainted with LRA's numerous other publications—notably those two invaluable news bulletins, "Economic Notes" and "Labor Notes."

If the *active* circulation of this book were one-tenth the aggregate of all Hearst publications, the chances are it would soon be exerting ten times their influence—and that against everything Hearst stands for.

HAROLD WARD.

Two for Truth, One for Hearst

NEW WORLDS FOR OLD, by Irina Skariatina and Victor Blakeslee. Bobbs-Merrill. $2.75.
RUSSIAN SOMERSAULT, by Igor Schwezoff. Harper & Bros. $3.50.
I WAS A SOVIET WORKER, by Andrew Smith. E. P. Dutton Co. $3.

IRINA SKARIATINA knew pre-war Europe as a Russian princess, granddaughter of a viceroy of Poland, General Paskevitch. In "New Worlds for Old" she tells of Europe revisited in the hectic summer of 1934, with her Annapolis-trained, journalist husband, Victor Blakeslee, who contributes several chapters to the book.

It is a brilliant piece of reporting of an exciting summer; buoyant, sparkling with anecdote which never sinks to the trivial, full of a gay humor which never descends to wise-cracking. It is warmly human without being sentimental, understanding without a trace of dullness.

The horrors of Hitler's Germany, where the authors arrived on the day of the blood purge of June, 1934, are conveyed in their full force, yet with a restraint like that of a Greek tragedy, so that the reading is bearable.

The scope and meaning of the changes made by the dictatorship of the proletariat in her native Russia are profoundly grasped and given in a series of living pictures sketched with a sure hand against the pre-war background she knew as a child and as a young woman in czarist days.

Poland, Austria (where they were at the time of the assassination of Dollfuss), Italy, Czechoslovakia, Oberammergau, all flash across the scene. In each country the essential feeling and color are caught and given. The reader shares the unforgettable experiences and impressions of Skariatina and Blakeslee. It is a sane, happy book written by happy, normal people. A book for old and young, bourgeois and proletarian. It cannot be too highly recommended as the book to be given those well-meaning people who still ask: "How can one tell what is really happening in Russia?"

At the time of the October Revolution Igor Schwezoff was thirteen, an aristocrat, son of a colonel in a crack regiment. His book, "Russian Somersault," is the frank story of his life both before and after the Revolution.

It is a revealing picture of the frivolity and aimlessness of those who ruled in the days of the Russian Empire; their utter helplessness before the whirlwind of the Revolution and their pitiful disintegration afterwards.

Igor, after a few years of a fantastic existence, made his way into the Marinsky Theater School to study to be a dancer. With the help and encouragement the Soviet government gave to the arts even during the darkest days of famine, civil war and Nep, he achieved a gratifying success and might have had a great future. His mind, however, had been molded in those first thirteen years and he could never even faintly understand the meaning of art in the new society springing up in the workers' state. For him art was an end in itself. He considers it simply idiotic to regard it in any other light.

This lack of comprehension, a scanty intellectual heritage and his inborn and inbred frivolity and individualism, brought him into frequent conflict with those about him. Finally, tired of the conflict, he decided to follow the rest of his family to Europe. He fled to Manchuria and after weeks of wandering in the wilderness he arrived in Harbin, penniless, shod in ballet slippers, but still light-hearted and ready to face the world.

His book received the $5,000 prize in an autobiography contest held in London recently. The choice was probably justified. For though it is shallow, it is frank, fairly truthful and always interesting, colorful, picaresque.

It is as free from bitterness as from understanding and gives an unforgettable picture of the fate of the Russian aristocracy in decay.

The hand of the ghost writer is evident in the Hearst-inspired "I Was a Soviet Worker" of Andrew Smith, a naturalized American worker, born in Hungary, who came to the United States at the age of 18. In America he was active in the revolutionary movement and in 1930 was sent with a workers' delegation to the Soviet Union. Returning to the United States he gave glowing accounts of the achievements of the workers and finally decided to return and throw in his lot with them permanently in 1932, so he says.

This time he took with him his wife, Maria Smith, who contributes several chapters to the book. He worked as an American "spetz" in Electrozavod, a large electric works in Moscow, from 1932 to the Spring of 1935, when he returned disgusted and disillusioned to the land of his adoption, where, to quote him, "even the dogs eat better than the workers in the Soviet Union."

According to the lurid accounts of himself and his wife there is nothing good in the Soviet Union. All factories are in a state of hopeless confusion and muddle. There is practically no output; what there is is worthless. All workers, with the exception of a select few "lick-spittles," are starving and discontented, sullenly rebellious, kept under by the the strong hand of a ruthless bureaucracy, only biding their time to rise and throw off the intolerable yoke of tyranny under which they are suffering. All members of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of the U.S.S.R. are ignorant, brutal, tyrannical, hypocritical, lecherous. The tyranny of Hitler's Germany is a benevolent despotism in comparison. The lot of the "free" American worker, heaven. The Soviet peasants have been bludgeoned into collectives where they are dying like flies of starvation. Mr. Smith even saw one dead one.

Mrs. Smith, who spent a few weeks recuperating in one of the rest homes in the Crimea, adds to the horrendous picture her stories of how these rest homes, closed to real workers, are used only as luxurious villas by the *filles de joie* who have found favor in the sight of the above-described members of the Communist Party.

Mr. Smith's veracity may best be gauged by his own estimate of it. On page 191-2, telling of a speech he was "forced through fear of the GPU" to give over the radio on his return from a trip through the Ukraine, he says:

"I wrote up a speech containing the most foolish twaddle I could think of, things that had never happened and that I had never seen. I let my imagination have full play. . . ."

The author has been his own best critic.

BEATRICE KINKEAD.

Brief Review

THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY, by Henry James. Modern Library. 95 cents. All the characters in this book are actuated by purely personal ends and problems, and these on a plane above material difficulties. They belong to a class whose only care is how to satisfy whatever passion chances to possess them; and, American or European, they suffer the afflictions of a decadent civilization. Of the lot Isabel is the most admirable, partly because she is something of a rebel. But she is not on James' terms wholly explicable. The motives assigned to her are too completely of the spirit, and James gives us no inkling that the cards were stacked against her by the social system. He lays her defeat, and that of the others, to merely personal factors, or perhaps to the fact that life is essentially ironic. But at this date we can hardly view character in this light. We see social pressures impelling and thwarting even these economically-emancipated individualists of capitalism's heyday. James is of importance to our understanding of the past and an expert craftsman, and we may welcome this convenient edition of one of his finest novels. But the novel's interest to us lies primarily in its elucidation on the psychological side of the deficiencies of bourgeois individualism. KATHERINE ELLIS.

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The Screen

"Fury"—Anti-Lynch Film

ALL of you movie hopheads taking the cure under Prof. Fearing, how many of you can remember as far back as *Fugitive From a Chain Gang?* It's not likely that many can. The cinema addict who can come out of his coma in front of the theater and remember how he got there, let alone recall the title and plot of the film that has been enthralling him for the last 60 minutes, really belongs in some other, less-serious ward, possibly the revolutionary dance. But if you do have a dim and confused recollection of *Fugitive From a Chain Gang,* M-G-M's current *Fury* is just like it, only better and it's a pretty good picture.

From *Hol' Up Yo' Head* by Herb Kruckman

To be accurate, it's one top-notch picture with two or three mediocre ones tossed in on top of it just to make sure the basic story doesn't make too much sense. Nobody knows what we movie-goers would do if confronted with a film that took a substantial theme and followed it through to its logical end. Maybe we wouldn't know the difference. Or we might explode. There might even, as some say, be a revolution.

Lynching is the subject of *Fury* and the first half of it is so realistic that when flames leap up the old courthouse and encircle the caged victim, you actually smell the burning flesh. It's really as savage and convincing and as good as that. If you think of the story as ending there, where it always does end in fact and if you also imagine the victim to be Negro, as he usually is and not white, then this is a film that will haunt your dreams for many a night and make the ordinary Hollywood thing seem tamer than a vacation postcard.

But there are a lot of "ifs" barring *Fury* from being the great picture that it might have been, and not even Spencer Tracy's fine, electrically-charged acting convinced me that a man so starkly burned to death could manage, by a simple miracle in the scenario, to come back to life. Saint Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, be with me in my hour of need! You can avert famine, war and pestilence by a close-up of Garbo singing a presidential proc lamation; you might even, I imagine, pass a liberal law that wouldn't be declared unconstitutional.

Considered strictly as melodrama, however, *Fury* is still an exceptional film. Some day in the future some great master of the cinema art, possibly myself, will write a serious treatise called "Evasion and Exposition: The Essential Methods of Each, with an Analysis of Their Relative Values, Purposes, Habits and Habitat." It will run to at least six volumes and undoubtedly be the opus your son works his way through college on. The principles advanced in the first three of them will be that evasion is the essential element of any art in a society based upon exploitation, that evasion's inner secret is the business of building improbability upon improbability whereas the process of exposition is the opposite, building probability upon probability and lastly, that although evasion predicates a stagnant art, it also forces increasingly brilliant technical innovations.

Fury has this technical ingenuity, this time simply in the field of plotting. After the realism of the lynch scene has built up the picture's tension, the remaining half of it is kept going by a series of surprises—the victim's survival, his self-concealment that leads on to a trial of the lynchers, the seeming collapse of the case against the lynchers until the dramatic introduction of motion-picture evidence and so on—each improbable, but not impossible, event skilfully connected to the next. Nothing but good acting could put the latter half of the film across and the cast was extremely good. It's amazing, seeing how much technical perfection alone can do for a picture.

But the real story lies wrapped up in the first part of it and it's fine anti-lynch stuff though not as pointed as it could have been —remember, we have to sell these pictures in the South. See the film, and imagine what might have been done with it.

KENNETH FEARING.

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WM. BOEHNEL, *N. Y. World-Telegram.*
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This Land of Ours

ROBERT FORSYTHE

WHAT particularly interested me in Edmund Wilson's *Travels in Two Democracies* was his amazement at finding that he was an American. What he had been feeling previously I never quite understood but he seemed to have a notion that a man of the left wing would necessarily be far more a citizen of the Soviet Union than a good native of New Jersey or Kansas. He refers to meeting another writer in the Park of Culture and Rest: "This Armenian of left sympathies . . . showed that it was his deepest pride that he could call himself an American. . . . "

I don't think I'm violating any confidence when I tell Mr. Wilson that he will find practically all American Communists possessed of a similar pride. If our present spiritual home is in Moscow, it is not to say that our hopes are anywhere but in the U.S.A. As a critic of importance, it is hard to believe that Mr. Wilson has not read the works of Michael Gold, who is so belligerently American that he will scalp any reactionary who seeks to place a patronizing finger on one of his heroes. In our jocose moments we may have twitted Mike on his "Daniel Boone Belongs to Us" but we were just as proud as he was of the people who fought to make a better America. Just why an American Communist has to hate America is beyond me. Why Wilson assumes that any of them do is equally a mystery. They hate the conditions in America which keep it from fulfilling itself, which is a quite different thing.

Critics of Stalin are always careful to overlook the Soviet policy toward racial minorities, which is one of the greatest of Bolshevik triumphs and one of Stalin's chief contributions in the early days of the revolution. For those like Mr. Wilson who have some mystic notion that belief in Communism means a sacrifice of all national pride, it is only necessary to point out that far from insisting on Russian unity the Bolsheviks have gone to the greatest lengths in encouraging minority groups to enrich their own culture and maintain their racial characteristics. They have supplied alphabets for tribes which have never had their own written word when they might just as easily have insisted on the transition from illiteracy being made in the Russian tongue.

What Mr. Wilson is probably mistaking for radicalism is an "expatriate" idea. The post-war intellectuals who escaped to Paris had a profound distaste for the uncouthness of America. Compared with the cultured atmosphere of Europe, it did seem a vast sprawling monstrosity filled with Rotarians, Philistines and the aggressively ignorant. At a time when the political radicals were fighting the late unlamented A. Mitchell Palmer, it was quite easy to imagine from a café seat on Montparnasse that America was an enemy of culture and that the spiritual home of any decent poet was elsewhere. As a consequence many intellectuals have persisted in thinking that since they had found America repugnant on artistic grounds, anybody who found it repugnant on any ground must necessarily have another more powerful allegiance. They ignore the fact that even during the revolt of the "exiles" there were intellectuals who hated the Epworth League culture of America just as heartily as they did but remained behind to fight it. They fought it not because they hated America but because they hated the forces, political, economic and cultural, which had it trapped. These did not consider Paris their spiritual home and if they looked toward Moscow for light, certainly were not content to surrender America to the enemy. As far back as 1921, Floyd Dell argued that Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman and Lincoln "belong to us."

America is a land with a revolutionary tradition and no sound Communist is unaware of it. If Mr. Wilson is in doubt about the position of the American Communist Party on the subject, he might read Earl Browder's pamphlet, *Lincoln and the Communists*. If he is still unconvinced he can get concrete evidence up at Daly's Theater on 63rd Street where W.P.A. is doing *Battle Hymn* by Michael Gold and Michael Blankfort. Gold has always been fascinated by the story of John Brown, just as he is aware of all great American figures and willing to sit up all night telling you what a fool you are for not appreciating them. It is an important play, acted right up to the handle of the sword and entirely enjoyable.. The curtain falls on a defeated old man who by his devotion to a cause had given the object lesson which was to bring the issue of slavery to a head. He is not only an American hero but a defender of the oppressed and an example for the world working class. John Brown is only one of many in American history who belong to us and *Battle Hymn* in addition to being a good play is important as a sign post for other proletarian playwrights. We have only ourselves to blame if we allow the reactionary patriotic societies to monopolize American fighters for freedom who no more belong to them than Andrew Mellon belongs to us.

In reviewing for Left Book News (the organ of the newly organized and very successful British Left Book Club) the new volume by Maurice Thorez, *France Today and the People's Front,* John Strachey has said about Thorez, the general secretary of the French Communist Party:

> This anatomy of the French people is written, let it be remembered, by a Frenchman and a patriot Frenchman; for it is certain that Maurice Thorez loves his country a hundred times better than do those professional patriots who, there as here [England], earn their substantial livings by speaking in her name.

It seems to me impossible for anybody to travel about the United States without acquiring a great affection for it. Not only is it a great country but a country which could almost literally support the world. Soviet America would be a triumph for civilization. The sickening feeling that a Communist has in traveling about this country is not from hatred but from sadness. What a wonderful land it is and how thwarted and crippled by a political and eco-

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nomic system which will not allow it to be developed to the utmost. When I think of the United States it is of a Gulliver lashed down by the thongs of a petty capitalism, a giant deliberately tripped up by forces afraid of an America completely fulfilled. Nothing in history was ever more obscene and immoral than the thought of an American citizen hungry or unclad.

The role of the international working class is paramount in breaking the fetters which halt progress and we feel a profound spirit of comradeship with the workers of every country, but it is nonsense to believe that people will be any less French or Spanish or American when the triumph of the working class is complete. When that most certain victory is achieved, it will be found that the working class belongs to the world and the world belongs to the working class, but the world will be no mythical and mechanical kingdom populated by paragons. It will be made up of people who will have found that life can only be free when the expropriators and exploiters are destroyed and also by people who live in Secaucus and South Bend and Oskaloosa and are proud of the fact.

Between Ourselves

WITH this issue we publish the concluding installment in the series "Spain in Revolt" by Ilya Ehrenbourg. In response to the many requests of readers who missed one or two of the articles in the series and desire complete files, we have set aside a limited quantity of back copies.

The articles have appeared consecutively in the last four issues. Leon Dennen has translated them from the Russian. Ehrenbourg, who contributes regularly to THE NEW MASSES, is the European correspondent of *Izvestia*.

The drawing on page 28 in this issue is part of the recently published *Hol' Up Yo' Head*, a volume of text and drawings by Herb Kruckman, who has been a contributor to THE NEW MASSES monthly and weekly. The original drawings are now on exhibition at the A.C.A. Gallery on West 8th Street, New York City, until June 13.

The first of a series of four articles by Joshua Kunitz, announced last week, begins with this issue. These unique commentaries on the Soviet Union are taken from Kunitz's travel diary, written during his recent trip from Moscow to New York, through Poland, Germany and France.

Next week's issue will contain, along with other features, an eye-witness account of the Republican Nominating Convention now being held in Cleveland. The report will be made by Marguerite Young, who has attended and reported the last three nominating conventions of the Republican Party.

The Chicago Friends of THE NEW MASSES will hold a symposium on "Which Way, Middle Class?" Sunday, June 21, 8:30 p.m. at the Lyon-Healy Building, 64 E. Jackson Boulevard, Chicago.

Among the speakers are: Meyer Levin, for the writers, Sidney Loeb, for the artists, Hart E. Baker, for the Lawyers Security League and Dr. Lawrence Jacques, for the medical profession. Ben Meyers will preside.

Tickets (25 cents) are on sale now at the Friends of the NEW MASSES office, Room 1003, 6 N. Clark Street, Chicago.

A party for the benefit of THE NEW MASSES will be held on the evening of June 12 in apartment 5C at 15 West 8th Street, New York. Admission 40 cents. Refreshments, dancing, entertainment.

Among the contributors to this issue:

Albert Morton ("Jottings on a Salesbook") is a salesman by trade.

James W. Ford, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, was the Communist candidate for vice-president of the United States in the last election.

Simon Doniger ("Social Work Comes of Age") is the executive director of the Jewish Child Guidance Bureau, Newark, N. J., and a member of the National Executive Committee of the Inter-Professional Association.

S. W. Gerson ("The Guild Goes to Town") is a staff member of The Daily Worker.

J. L. Peterson ("Our 'House of Lords'") is the pseudonym of a well-known attorney.

Plans for the coming NEW MASSES quarterly issue will be announced in detail soon. This special enlarged issue of 48 pages will contain a special section of sixteen pages devoted to the issues in the coming election campaign. The quarterly is scheduled to appear on July 28.

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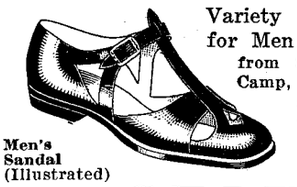
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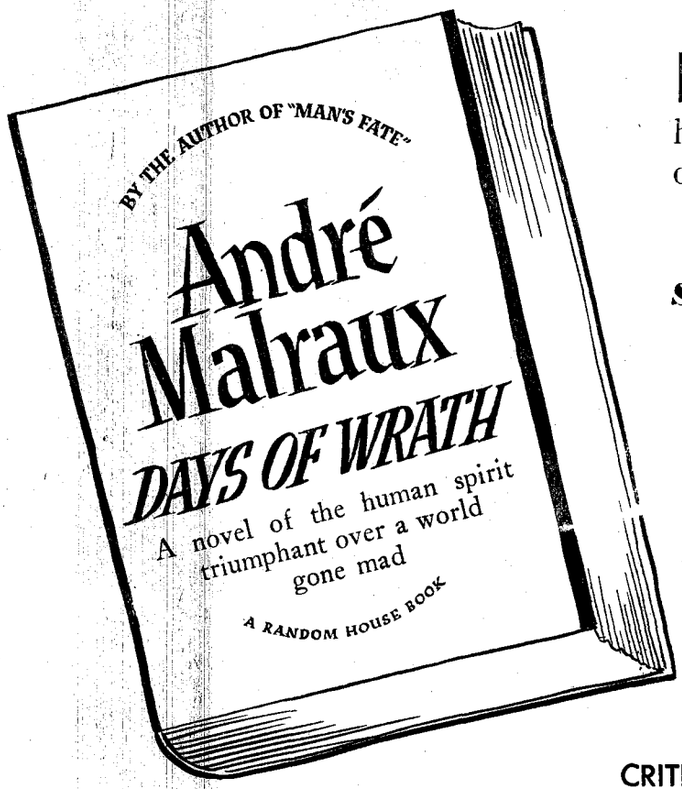
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